

THE COMMON SENSE OF NUDISM

INCLUDING A SURVEY OF SUN-BATHING
AND "LIGHT TREATMENTS"

By

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BIRTH CONTROL :

A Practical Guide for Working Women

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*Marriage in the Melting Pot***

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This little book has been written to fulfil a specific need. It aims to provide the working woman with full information, presented in plain language, respecting such reliable methods of Birth Control as she is capable of employing and can afford to employ. The author, wasting neither time nor space in discussing the many methods which in her particular case are impracticable, presents a manual packed full of helpful advice. It is a thoroughly reliable handbook and one which should be in the possession of every working woman.

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“ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him , male and female created he them.

“ And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good.

“ And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed ”

Genesis 1. 27, 31 , ii. 25.

CHAPTER I

A MATTER OF DEFINITION

"There's not a bathing-suit in all Russia"—WILL ROGERS.

I

SUN-BATHING is attracting a tremendous amount of attention in Europe and America. Germany set the ball rolling. France followed in Germany's footsteps—a little hesitantly, true enough, but follow she did. Then, likewise with tremulous footsteps, came America. And lastly, and even more hesitantly, came England.

Now sun-bathing, in popular parlance, does not *necessarily* imply nudity. But it represents, if it is carried out in any adequate sense, a definite step towards nudity; even although nudity itself still sticks in the throat of the average respectable member of society. Sun-bathing may merely refer to the common seaside practice of exposing oneself to

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the sun's rays while wearing the minimum amount of clothing that the policeman allows. Interpreted, this means that the costume of the sun-bath is barely distinguishable from the more daring of the fashionable bathing-suits. There are grounds for assuming that it is to sun-bathing along these lines that George Bernard Shaw and Dean Inge have given their blessing. Nudism makes no such truce with or concession to orthodoxy. It implies nakedness, entire and unashamed.

A very few years ago the semi-nudity of the beach promenader, and the very notion of mixed bathing, aroused a storm of protest. To-day, neither the one nor the other causes much comment. Twenty years ago the "leg-show" of Chicago so outraged respectability that its clientele were restricted to men—to-day, in comparison with a modern London revue produced for family enjoyment, a simulacrum of the Chicago "leg-show" would appear a singularly tame affair. What was tabooed yesterday is tolerated to-day, and will leap into respectability to-morrow. Sun-bathing, once the derided, the ridiculed, the abused, is now respectable. More, it is enormously popular, and this popularity is growing year by year, in nearly

every country in Europe and in America. But nudity still retains a place of prominence in the ranks of the ostracised.

When the benefits of sun-bathing are admitted, as to-day they are almost universally admitted—which, in other words, means that the exposure of the skin to sun and air is recognised as a valuable health cult—it is difficult to see how opposition to complete nudity can be logically justified. The truth is that sex obscures the issue. Sex always obscures and perverts any judgment respecting an issue of which it forms an integral part. It is strange that a man should have to close the door and see that his windows are shuttered or impenetrably curtained before he ventures to take off his clothes, unless he is prepared to run the risk of being haled into court, charged with exhibitionism or indecent exposure, and publicly branded with much the same kind of obloquy as is the lot of one proved guilty of masturbation, or of rape, or of incest. Possibly it was a realisation of the risk of just such a contretemps that caused Benjamin Franklin to choose the early morning for sitting in his bedroom stark naked enjoying an “air-bath.”

We are unaccustomed to nudity, and so we

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are ashamed of it, or afraid of it, or disgusted with it. In the minds of the average man and woman nudity necessarily connotes sex. It was just this connotation that caused Gorki (according to the story he told Frank Harris) to strike General Kornet's wife across her posterior with a shovel when she lifted her chemise and showed him her nude body, and it was the same connotation which caused Tolstoi to roar with laughter when Gorki related the story to him.

II

One of the results of the persistence of the sex taboo is the policy of camouflage adopted by so many of the nudists and their supporters. They avoid the term nudism as much as and wherever possible. Many clubs cause their members to wear trunks, girdles and brassières. Even in Germany, the original home of modern nakedness, the German equivalent for nudism is avoided, and euphemistic terms are used in reference to the movement: in instance, *Freikorperkultur* has now almost universally displaced the older and more explicit *Nacktkultur*. In other countries, such terms as naturism, or gymnosophy, or

the "back-to-Nature movement," or sun-bathing, are used. All the time there is noticeable a marked reluctance to call a spade a spade ; there is an apologetic attitude to be observed, and an attempt to justify the cult by tortuous argument and reiterated denials of crude popular criticisms based upon sexual myths. It reminds one of the efforts made by so many of the birth-control enthusiasts to justify their propaganda on the grounds of eugenics, the alleviation of unemployment, *et al.*

The stressing of this apologetic attitude is overdone. It is high time the nudists had the courage of their opinions. It is not enough to chant the popular slogan : " To the pure all things are pure." This is empty claptrap. Purity, as at present recognised, is a comedy of frustration. To the pure, all things they wish to do, but cannot or dare not do, are impure.

The members of the opposition camp similarly shirk the issue. They are obsessed with the fear of sex. Confronted with the weight of scientific and medical opinion, they timidly admit that nudity may be conducive to better health, but they submit it should not be practised because it would lead irretrievably into sin.

One result of all this is the secretiveness which is so intimately associated with the nudity movement. The nearer the approach to actual nudity the greater the degree of secrecy. Many of the nudist organisations will reveal the whereabouts of their meeting-places only to those who are actually members.

It may be, of course, that this fuss, this secretiveness, this whispering, in connection with the nudity cult, has something to do with its attractiveness for certain sections of the populace. Anything which is imbued with the spice of naughtiness may be calculated to appeal. And in this respect there is something in connection with nudity on a par with banned novels, forbidden plays and secret night-clubs.

In this setting, nudity in England, in America, and, to a lesser extent, in Germany and in France, becomes something to gape at, to wonder about, to excite oneself over, to discuss heatedly. In Asia, and Africa, and Polynesia, nakedness is so ordinary an affair that it is not worth bothering one's head about. In Russia and in Scandinavia, where nude bathing has been in vogue for centuries, there are no nudist clubs or sun-bathing

societies. The inhabitants of these countries are not disgusted at the sight of a naked body emerging from the sea ; they are not even interested.

Some fifteen years ago I happened to be on a ranch in the Middle West of America. A youth who hailed from Northern Scandinavia had a habit of parading about the ranch-house stark naked and with an easy air of smiling nonchalance. We menfolk—excepting myself, Americans all—looked upon Finn as “ a bit cracked,” but quite harmless, and let it go at that. But the womenfolk held different views. They would have none of it. They were disgusted, and said so in no uncertain terms, threatening to leave in a body. So the “ air-bather ” had to go, much to his surprise.

III

The nudity movement, though invariably based upon health improvement, is not in all cases so simple and straightforward a matter. It often overlaps or embraces other movements—it may be mixed up with vegetarianism, or the “ back-to-Nature ” cult, or teetotalism. For instance, in Germany, many

nudist clubs and societies were interlinked with socialistic or communistic movements, the cult of nakedness being but a means for the furtherance of democratic and levelling principles. In France there is one organisation which includes free love in its nudist programme.

There are, too, societies where the promoters and their satellites pursue their propagandistic activities with the fervent zeal of fanatics, and in such cases nudity ranks as a form of religion, much as it did, nearly two thousand years ago, in the case of the Adamites. If these modern nudists are not actual sun-worshippers, as were the pagans of old, they come within a hair's breadth of meriting the description. Then there are the frankly commercial organisations quick to see the financial possibilities in the new cult.

Naturally enough, there is a good deal of bunkum in circulation respecting nudity. Commercial propaganda implies exaggeration. And fanaticism implies exaggeration. The only difference between the two is that in the one case the exaggeration is conscious, and in the other case it is unconscious. Connected with the nudity cult, in large and

ever-growing numbers, are these commercial propagandists and fanatics. Between them, these two classes are responsible for the bulk of the mis-statements respecting the beneficial effects, physical and psychological, of nakedness.

In addition, there are those who, though imbued with neither commercial aims nor fanatical ideals, are yet fully convinced that nudity, while it is neither a panacea for all the ills to which the flesh is heir, nor practicable on a continuous scale, is distinctly valuable and beneficial to those who are in a position to practise it.

Out of all the welter of exaggeration, camouflage and error, out of the clutter of argument, a few facts stand starkly and incontrovertibly. Light and air are essential to life. Sunshine is Nature's weapon for waging war on disease and depression. We deprive the skin, or at any rate about nineteen-twentieths of it, of this valuable light and air for at least nine months out of each year. Now while no sane person is going to advocate parading about naked in all circumstances and all the time, if we could practise nudity regularly for a couple of hours daily no doubt many of us would be a good deal

better in health. Indeed, it is a reasonably safe assumption that the one who practises nudity for a short time daily, or who indulges in occasional spurts of longer duration, will benefit far more than will the habitual nudist, for the stimulating and beneficial influences of nakedness, like those of alcohol, or of Epsom salts, are most fully experienced by those who rely upon occasional doses.

And if children were brought up to go without clothes for a short period during each day, they would probably grow up all the healthier both physically and morally. These and other facts will emerge in the course of the examination we are about to make in the following pages.

CHAPTER II

THE ANTIQUITY OF NUDITY

“The nakedness of woman is the work of God.”—
WILLIAM BLAKE.

I

THERE is nothing new in nudity as a health cult. It is customary for those who are against nudity in modern life to denounce it as a return to savagery, or as a sign of moral degeneration. But these arguments are the result of a woeful lack of knowledge respecting the facts. They are based—where they have any basis at all—upon erroneous information and dubious evidence.

In the ancient civilisations of Rome and Greece, sun-bathing in the nude state was common enough. So universal was it, indeed, that the Roman *solarium*, or sun-parlour, was considered an essential feature of every residence. They had, in those days, a high respect for the sun, and they were well aware

of the virtues of sunshine as a health promoter. Hippocrates was the most ancient physician of whom we have any record to expose his patients to the rays of the sun as a method of treating disease. This was as long ago as four hundred years before the birth of Christ. Herodotus, a contemporary historian, describes the sun-baths then in vogue, and refers to their invigorating and healing powers.

Later, Greek and Roman physicians prescribed sun-baths for various ailments. In fact, the probability is that they attributed to the sun, these ancient and somewhat crude practitioners, powers of healing altogether at variance with the truth. Thus Antyllus, the famous Roman surgeon, prescribed sun-bathing for most of the then known distempers; Galen, the celebrated Greek physician, and one of the greatest early authorities on medicine, was equally enthusiastic. Centuries later, Avicenna, the Arabian philosopher, and physician to the royal house, went so far as to maintain that sun-bathing in itself was sufficient to produce immunity to all forms of disease.

But apart from any question of the beneficial effects of exposure to the direct rays of

the sun as a mode of healing, nudity itself was looked upon, in those days, from an altogether different standpoint. The concept of repulsion at the sight of the naked body was not general until the advent of Christianity. Nakedness, where the body was not marred by the effects of disease, the cicatrices of wounds or accidents, the protuberances and other ugly signs of old age, was a thing not to be ashamed of, but to be proud of. The ladies of ancient Greece who thought their bodies and skins sufficiently pleasing to the sight disdained anything in the way of covering beyond mere ornamentation. And the same applied in the case of the male sex. Athenæus¹ mentions that the girls and young men to be seen promenading in a state of nakedness presented a beautiful picture. Saint Chrysostom speaks of the Roman ladies appearing in public, and particularly in the theatres, entirely nude, and without any sense of shame or embarrassment. Juvenal, the famous Roman poet, writing of the first century, mentions the same thing. From all the available evidence it would appear that nudity was common among the aristocracy of Rome and Greece in the

¹ Athenæus, Book XIII.

centuries immediately preceding and immediately following the birth of Christianity. Plato¹ recommended women to leave off all clothing when exercising in the *palæstra*, and this, too, in the presence of the male sex. Theopompus² and Athenæus³ both refer to the Tyrrhenian ladies who practised gymnastics being devoid of clothing; while Timæus, writing of the same race, asserts that the men were waited upon by naked female servants. The custom of the ladies of Greece divesting their bodies of all clothing in order to heighten and display their attractions is referred to by Apuleius.⁴ The nude was even more common among Spartan women, and at solemn feasts it was customary for girls to dance in a state of nakedness. A similar custom, according to Persæus, was in vogue among the Thessalians. Petronius goes farther than the lot of them—he refers to a secret buttock-worship among the Romans of his day, the buttocks of the female being objects of admiration and even adoration.

It should be noted that nudity, in those ancient days, especially among the female

¹ Plato, *Republic*, Book V.

² Theopompus, *History*

³ Athenæus, *Deipnosophistæ*

⁴ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*.

sex, and altogether unconnected with health, was practised by those with gracefully formed bodies and perfect skins. In many cases, as Apuleius and other ancient writers mention, it was adopted specifically as a means of attracting the attention of the male. Among a collection of clothed members of society, a sprinkling of nude women possessed of perfect figures and exquisite skins and complexions would be bound to attract attention.

II

In the transition period, when paganism was being displaced by Christianity, we see evidence of the persistence of nudity in the condemnation of virgin women indulging in mixed bathing. After his conversion to the Christian Church, Cyprian wrote :

“ What of those who frequent baths, who prostitute to eyes that are curious to lust, bodies that are dedicated to chastity and modesty ? They who disgracefully behold naked men, and are seen naked by men. Do they not themselves afford enticement to vice ? . . . Such a washing defiles ; it does not purify nor cleanse the limbs, but stains them. You behold no one immodestly, but you, yourself, are gazed upon immodestly ; you do not

pollute your eyes with disgraceful delight, but in delighting others you yourself are polluted; you make a show of the bathing-place; the places where you assemble are fouler than a theatre."

From the time of Cyprian the fight which Christianity waged against sex waxed fiercer and stronger. Nudity, instead of being a universal custom arousing little or no comment, became something to parade on special occasions before select audiences, or in privacy, or for certain religious purposes, as in baptism.¹ Thus, during the fourth century, at the time of the festival known as the Mayuma, the women attended the theatre in a state of complete nudity; and, according to Chrysostom, the Emperor Arcadius attempted to stop the practice. Thus when Louis XI, in 1461, visited Paris, the demonstration and entertainment prepared for him included three nude girls representing the Syrens; and similarly in the same century, three girls representing goddesses paraded naked before Charles² the Bold on the occasion of his visit to Lille.

¹ During the fourth century it was decreed that a person wishing to be baptised must be completely naked. In "The Baptism of Christ," by Verrocchio, which can be seen in the Florence Academy, except for a loin-cloth Christ is depicted naked.

Certain religious sects made a feature of nudity. Thus the Adamites, a heretical sect flourishing in the second century, according to Epiphanius, always appeared naked during their religious observances; so did the Brethren of the Free Spirit, a German body which appeared in the thirteenth century and existed intermittently and somewhat precariously for some two hundred years; so, too, did the Picards, a Flanders fifteenth-century sect. The most orthodox religious bodies did not denounce nakedness in connection with their gods and saints—at one time Adam and Eve¹ were depicted naked, and the nude Jesus was shown in pictures² and on crucifixes. On the stage in the early days of Christianity the part of Christ was taken by a living man completely naked.

For a long time, even in the more civilised countries of Europe, under the Christian dispensation there was no condemnation of nudity *per se*. So long as the private parts were adequately concealed from the public gaze, no fuss was made. The condemnation

¹ A fresco painting on the ceiling of the church at Hildesheim, Germany, depicts Adam and Eve in the nude.

² In the Vatican at Rome, Michelangelo's "Christ" shows a nude Jesus.

and the prohibition of nakedness were essentially concerned with the sexual side of the thing: thus the attempts (largely unsuccessful) in some countries to prohibit mixed bathing, which for hundreds of years after the coming of Christianity was performed in a state of nudity, bathing-slips, -drawers and -costumes being unknown. All through the Middle Ages males and females, stark naked both, bathed together; and eventually the reason for the cessation of the practice in Western Europe, at any rate, was the rapid spread of syphilis with the consequent fear of infection.

The fact that the English did not appear naked in the streets at a time when, in other European countries, nude men and women were common sights, was due neither to moral strictures nor Puritan ideals—it was the result of the more treacherous and colder climate of England necessitating the donning of some protective covering. Actually, there was no law against nudity so long as the sexual organs were covered. Pepys, writing in 1667, tells of a Quaker appearing nude in Westminster Hall. According to Moryson,¹ nudity in Ireland was common. He mentions

¹ Moryson, *Itinerary*.

seeing naked girls at Cork engaged in grinding corn. This was in 1617.

It must be remembered that in those days, even though the body was covered during the day, nakedness was customary at night, and for this reason the nude body was a familiar sight to all. Nightclothes for men, even in aristocratic circles, did not come into use until the sixteenth century ; and among the poor the custom of sleeping in the nude was kept up by both sexes until much later.

CHAPTER III

THE EVOLUTION OF CLOTHING

“ He sayde, a woman cast hir shame away
When she cast of hir smok ”—CHAUCER.

I

WE have for so long been accustomed to clothing, and we have grown up in a social environment dominated by the Christian concept of nudity and sin being synonymous, that the majority find it difficult to conceive of nakedness, in any circumstances other than the strictest privacy, being other than grossly immodest and, in most instances, immoral.

Actually, nudity, in itself, is neither moral nor immoral, neither modest nor immodest. What makes it the one or the other are the circumstances in which it occurs, conditioned by religion and the social customs of the community. Thus the appearance of a nude man or woman in a society like our own,

where clothing is customary, is considered the height of immodesty ; whereas in a savage tribe, where it is customary for all members to walk about as God made them, the donning of clothing by one of its members would be dubbed an act of indecency. We see evidence in all abundance of this in the widely divergent reactions of various races to the exposure of different parts of the body. The woman of China will show the whole of her body, except the feet, to all and sundry, but she will be all hot and bothered if anyone other than her husband should so much as catch a glimpse of her uncovered feet ; in Turkey a girl blushes with shame if she is caught unveiled ; the females of Mohammedan races will gleefully expose any part of their bodies except their faces. Similarly, the women of Assam show everything but their breasts ; in the Malay Peninsula, the native girls only express shame if caught with their navels exposed ; among certain African races, it is customary to cover the posterior with a sort of apron, while those very frontal sexual regions that, according to current European morals, are thought to be so indecent are exposed without the slightest sense of shame. Sumner,

quoting from Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, says :
 " An Arab woman, in Egypt, cares more to cover her face than any other part of her body, and she is more careful to cover the top or back of her head than her face."¹

There is always a definite risk, where an individual does something different from other members of the community, that this enterprising person may be condemned by his brethren as a criminal, or accused of being insane, indecent, immoral or merely eccentric, according to the nature of the code, written or unwritten, which he transgresses. The indecency connected with nudity, in the minds of modern civilised members of society, is, of course, vitally connected with sex, and with the moral codes which call for the rigorous concealment, not only of the sex organs themselves, but of all those parts of the body which are supposed, from the coming of puberty onwards, to arouse or stimulate sexual passion. Children have always been allowed far more latitude as regards uncovering the body than have adults, and the sight of a naked new-born babe arouses no feeling of disgust in either men or women observers.

¹ W. G. Sumner, *Folkways*, Boston, 1907, p 434

Shame, which precedes modesty, and indeed incorporates it, is really another name for fear; insomuch as it results from the dread of being ostracised, condemned or censured for doing something which will merit the disapproval of one's fellows, and particularly of one's intimates or relatives. The so-called daring of man, and particularly of woman, almost invariably follows along lines tentatively approved by society—thus the daring dress of women is merely an extension of what is already definitely approved by tolerance. It rarely goes so far as to be antagonistic to current tendencies. This has been evident all through the ages. It is true in the case of primitive man. In tribes where tattooing is customary, the man who for some reason or other has failed to get his body decorated on conventional lines is imbued with a feeling of shame in the presence of his tattooed fellow men. The present-day Englishman who attends a dinner-party and discovers that everyone except himself is arrayed in evening clothes is ashamed, confused and miserable. When it ceased to be customary for man to go about nude, or comparatively nude, and the sight of nakedness became something to write

home about, in the eyes of the clothed person any nude being became a shameful and an indecent sight. Similarly, where all men are nude, it is the clothed person who is ashamed. Frances and Mason Merrill, describing their visit to a nudist park in Germany, mention how, on coming in contact with a naked man, while he betrayed no signs of humiliation, they "felt a positive sense of shame" and "blushed with embarrassment."¹

The instinctive modesty that one reads about in novels, and which one hears people speak of, is a myth. Modesty is not instinctive. It cannot be instinctive, because, as we have seen, it varies enormously according to time, circumstance and environment. No child is ashamed of being naked until it has been taught that the exposure of certain parts of the body is tabooed. Similarly, no savage belonging to a tribe in which it is customary for the body to be uncovered attaches any idea of shame or immodesty to nudity. The savage feels no sense of embarrassment in a state common to all from birth. In this connection the remarks of Sir H. H. Johnston relative to the negroes of Central Africa, quoted by

¹ Frances and Mason Merrill, *Among the Nudists*, Noel Douglas, 1931.

Havelock Ellis, are instructive and revealing :

“ In this land of nudity, which I have known for seven years, I do not remember once having seen an indecent gesture on the part of either man or woman. . . . It may safely be asserted that the negro race in Central Africa is much more truly modest, is much more free from real vice, than are most European nations.”¹

In modern civilisation what is immodest and tabooed in one set of circumstances becomes, if not actually modest, at any rate tolerated in another different set of circumstances. And it is axiomatic that what is tolerated to-day becomes customary to-morrow. We see abundant evidence of this in the steadily increasing laxity in regard to the regulations respecting bathing-dress that has been so marked a feature in recent years. We see, too, all the evidence we need respecting the varying definitions of what constitutes modesty in the different regulations in vogue at the various seaside resorts, and in the fact that the scantiness of attire which at a seaside holiday resort would pass uncondemned, or would, at most, call for little comment, in the streets of London or Birmingham

¹ H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, 1897, quoted by Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, Vol. I Third edition, 1925

or Leeds would lead to an appearance in the police court.

II

Whatever connection there may be to-day, in civilised society, between clothing and modesty, we may, for the reasons already indicated, dismiss as unsound the popular argument that the habit of clothing the body arose through shame at the idea of nudity.

Naturally, inevitably, the question arises, why did the custom of wearing clothes come into existence at all? The contention that clothing is necessary as a protection against the rigours of the climate is tenable to a very limited extent only; and, at most, cannot account for more than a partial covering of the body. Natives in various parts of the globe, ranging from the equatorial regions of terrific heat to the temperate zones, for countless generations have gone about naked or with a minimum amount of clothing. Even such modicum of clothing as has been worn, in many cases, has had nothing whatever to do with climatic conditions, but has been adopted to protect certain sensitive parts

against injury through trees, insects or accidental contacts during work or play. After all, the need for clothing as a protection against cold and wet is largely a cultivated need. The ability to accustom the body gradually to climatic conditions even in our comparatively cold northern clime is well exemplified in the manner in which modern woman in recent years has discarded much of the clothing to which, in previous generations, she has been accustomed.

There is no doubt whatever, however, that the origin of clothing was partly due to its supposed virtue as a protective agent—not as a protective agent against climatic conditions, but against evil spirits. Among all primitive and savage races there is fear of the unknown, there is much superstition, there is universal belief in magic, in sorcery, in witchcraft. The fear of the evil eye hangs like a black shadow over everyone. Simultaneously there is almost always a belief in demons or evil spirits possessing the power to have intercourse with women,¹ and hence the

¹ The belief that devils or demons could, when they desired, indulge in fornication with women was widely held not only by savages, but by the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, including such notabilities as Philo, Plato, Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria; it permeates the Bible, it survived for well over a thousand years of the Christian dispensation

need for protection against them. The belief in virgin birth, occasioned by the spirit of a god, or of an angel, or of a demon, entering the woman through some unprotected and vulnerable part, was universal in ancient times. We have an indication of this in Saint Paul's insistence on the need for woman to keep her head covered :

“ But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head : for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn : but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God : but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman ; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman ; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.” (1 Cor. xi. 5-10.)

It would appear that Saint Paul, after all, had little faith in the chastity of the angels—he recommended the covering of the head as a sign to the angels that here was forbidden fruit ; as well as a form of protection against

demons in accordance with the popular superstition of the time.¹

Similarly, according to Havelock Ellis, Singhalese women cover the vulvar opening in order to frustrate the attempts of demons to enter and have intercourse. In other tribes it is customary to wear charms and amulets of various descriptions in order to secure immunity from the visitations of evil spirits, and to ward off disease, which, among many primitive races, is attributed, as it was in the time of Christ, to the visitations of demons.

III

We now approach another and much-vaunted reason for the origin of clothing ; to wit, the desire of the human animal to draw attention to and exploit its sexual charms. Psychoanalysing the legend of Adam, in the prevalent neo-biographical manner, we find that vanity in his virile powers was more likely to be the reason for his adoption of a garb calculated to draw attention to his

¹ The custom of women wearing hats in church is still religiously carried out, though few worshippers are aware that the reason for this custom was to protect the wearer against the entry through the ears of evil spirits, with resultant conception

manliness, than the shame which the compilers of the Book of Genesis assert. Where it is customary for everyone to go about naked the one who is sufficiently enterprising or daring to adopt some form of ornamentation is certain to attract attention—the social status of the innovator will have much to do with the reaction of the rest of the populace to the experiment. For a precisely analogous reason the same results occur when, in a society in which everyone is accustomed to wear clothing, some individual or other elects to discard all or most of these coverings. Thus the semi-nudity of the modern English society woman or actress.

We have ample grounds for the belief, according to the observations of many travellers, explorers and anthropologists, that in the majority of instances savage races adopt clothing in order to promote sexual attraction ; which explains why many natives who are accustomed to go about entirely nude look upon the man or woman who adopts any form of covering as indecent. Lohmann, quoted by Westermarck, mentions that in the Salira tribe, the prostitutes wear clothing, while all the other women are nude. The same writer quotes Simpson's remarks

respecting the nudity of the Napo Indians in Ecuador: "Clothing with all savages is primarily looked upon as mere embellishment, though Indians who have frequent communication with more civilised men begin to show some shame when entirely nude." And again, Parkinson, another observer, says: "Nakedness by itself causes no sexual excitement in a native." Thus the attempt, by ornament or dress, to attract the attention of, and to arouse sexual desire in, the opposite sex.

But strong as is, without doubt, the sexual urge in the matter of the adoption of ornament and decoration, it is not the sole nor, I think, the main reason. The vanity of mankind is not purely a sexual vanity. It is often but another name for the lust for power; the wish to prance and strut before one's fellow creatures. It is this desire for power, which appears to find its first beginnings in the most primitive of races, that leads to the adoption of some means or other of drawing the attention and arousing the envy not only of members of the opposite sex, which is the distinguishing feature of anything connected with the development of sexual attraction, but also in connection with

one's own sex. This has been apparent from the beginning of time and all through the ages. The society woman in the donning of her gorgeous upholstery is not concerned solely with the extension of her sexual power over man ; she is just as much, and often even more, concerned with standing out from her sisters and exciting their admiration and envy. Even more does this apply in the case of the male. Thus the donning of ornaments by generals, mayors, bishops, lion-tamers, *et al.*

It is in this increase in the dignity of man and woman, this feeling of superiority, dominance and power, that is intimately associated with ornamentation and decoration ; in other words, it is in this development of the ego, that probably lies the main reason for the origin of the habit of clothing the human body, and which, beyond any doubt or question, is mainly responsible for the huge extension and development of dress among the civilised races of mankind.

The psychologist is well aware of the powerful and cumulative influence which environmental and extraneous factors have upon the human mind. Not the least of these factors is dress or ornamentation. In its

most primitive form it shows itself in the way in which the child or the savage struts about when dressed up in gaudy new clothes ; in its most developed form we see its expression in the narcissism inherent in the gorgeously upholstered woman of fashion, or in the male duly decorated with the regalia of office and authority. Not only does the resplendently attired and decorated lady obtain respect and attention, while the dowdy or shabbily dressed girl is ignored, but she herself, by virtue of the very fact of parading clothes of distinction, unconsciously but none the less surely is imbued with authority. Analogously, the poorly dressed woman, painfully conscious of the drabness and shabbiness of her apparel, is timid and suppliant. In the male the same thing applies. The prosperous-looking individual, the wearer of robes and chains of office, gets respect and attention not alone from the fact that he is decorated with the signs that command respect, but by virtue of the fact that, knowing the excellence and impressiveness of his apparel and decorations, he unconsciously assumes a commanding attitude himself, radiating authority. On the other hand, the down-at-heel is servile and humble. He

becomes so accustomed to the kicks of the more prosperous that he begins to expect them as a matter of course. Governments, well aware of the practical aspects of all this, though they may not be familiar with their actual origin, succeed in destroying, in those which they wish to use as tools, and in those whom they wish to subdue or punish, any remnants of that lust for power which is so normal a human characteristic. Thus the drab uniform of the soldier and of the convict.

We see evidences of the beginnings of this striving of the individual to stand out from the ruck, before ever the question of clothing was thought of. It manifested itself in decorating the human body by either temporary and changeable ornamentation, as in painting the skin or wearing beads, necklaces and the like ; or in fixed ornamentation, as in tattooing and mutilation. True, in some cases, the ornamentation is to protect against evil spirits or to act as a charm ; but often, additionally, and more often wholly, it is intended to add to the dignity of the wearer in the eyes not only of his compatriots, whether friends or enemies, but also of himself. Thus according to Lumholtz, the natives

of Queensland intensified their blackness with paint. Marco Polo¹ points out a similar custom among the natives of the Province of Malabar. We see the same thing in the custom of nude savages wearing collars, necklaces and head ornaments. Even the girdle, in most instances, was purely ornamental and altogether unconnected with sexual concealment. Its development into the kilt, and later into the skirt and trousers, forms an interesting chapter in the evolution of clothing.

Tattooing is mainly a decorative device.² In most cases it has preceded clothes; in some instances, notably among certain classes in Japan and other parts of the East, it has displaced clothing. Scarification is a cruder method of decoration in vogue among the Australian Blacks, the American Indians and other primitive races, where clay is inserted into a series of patterned cuts made in the skin, thus producing permanent ridges. Somewhat allied to scarification and tattooing is the practice of depilation favoured by many African tribes. This usually takes the

¹ Marco Polo, *Travels*, Chapter xx

² Tattooing is one of the most ancient forms of decoration. Herodotus mentions its popularity among the Thracians, asserting that: "To be tattooed is a sign of nobility, not to be, a sign to the contrary."

form of plucking the eyebrows or the scalp. In some oriental races all hairy growths in the pubic regions of both men and women are removed.

Other forms of decoration—for so they are looked upon by the natives who practise them—are actual mutilations. The fingers, the teeth, the lips, the ears, the nose, the mouth, the cheeks, and even the skull itself are all mutilated by one race or another. Thus the Hottentots and Bushmen of Africa, and the Indians of America, amputate one finger or more. The Australian Blacks remove some of the teeth and colour the remainder; the natives of Borneo have a method of inlaying the teeth with various metals; the Senegalese pierce the lip and wear decorations in it; in many African tribes and in the islands of Polynesia it is customary to bore the nose for the wearing of rings; certain South American aborigines pierce the cheeks and stick feathers or other ornaments in the holes thus formed; while the wearing of ear-rings is too widely distributed among both uncivilised and civilised races to call for comment. In many instances these decorations were strictly limited to certain members of the tribe, in others they

were marks of differentiation between the tribesmen and their servants or slaves, as in the skull mutilation of the Tahitians and certain tribes of American Indians.

Sexual mutilations, too, were not always, and rarely altogether, limited to their religious significance. The Malay *ampallang*, for instance, added to the male's attractiveness in the eyes of the female.

It must not be overlooked that in every case the value of ornamentation or decoration is definitely circumscribed, applying only to the race or nation where it is practised. Such a custom is closely bound up with other allied and interlinked social observances, and cannot function effectively divorced from its own peculiar environment. In the eyes of an alien observer it becomes ridiculous, vulgar and offensive. Thus the native chieftain transplanted into European or American surroundings, so long as he retains his ornaments, becomes something to gape at patronisingly in the circus or on the music-hall stage; the moment he dons the decorations of the white man he ranks as a menial to be insulted and kicked from pillar to post.

Here we touch one of the main reasons for the disruptive effects upon native races

which so very often follow the advent of European civilisation. Alcohol and syphilis have, true enough, their share in the thing ; but the moral deterioration and loss of all dignity and pride which surely follow have far greater effects. Thirty-odd years ago Robert Louis Stevenson sensed something of this. In his book, *In the South Seas*, in which he records his observations in Polynesia, occurs this passage :

“ Where there have been fewest changes, important or unimportant, salutary or hurtful, there the race survives. Where there have been most, important or unimportant, salutary or hurtful, there it perishes. Each change, however small, augments the sum of new conditions to which the race has to become inured. There may seem, *a priori*, no comparison between the change from ‘sour toddy’ to bad gin, and that from the island kilt to a pair of European trousers. Yet I am far from persuaded that the one is any more hurtful than the other ; and the unaccustomed race will sometimes die of pin-pricks. . . . It is easy to blame the missionary. But it is his business to make changes. It is surely his business, for example, to prevent war ; and yet I have instanced war itself as one of the elements of health. On the other hand, it were, perhaps, easy for the missionary to proceed more gently,

and to regard every change as an affair of weight. I take the average missionary ; I am sure I do him no more than justice when I suppose that he would hesitate to bombard a village, even in order to convert an archipelago. Experience begins to show us (at least in the Polynesian Islands) that change of habit is bloodier than a bombardment."

IV

Inevitably there crops up the danger of every custom outliving its usefulness. In particular is this danger a penalty of the ultra-civilisation of to-day. The decorative aspect of clothing has been developed through the centuries, and simultaneously through the incidence of the machine age, to such a degree that it is now possible to produce replicas of every new decorative feature, whether it be jewellery or dress, by mass-production methods, quickly and cheaply. Coincidentally, the increased prosperity and higher standard of living among the working classes, the remarkable rise in democracy, the emancipation of women, the enormous spread of popular education, together have sufficed to create in Europe and America a herd of people so universally well-dressed, decorated,

painted and powdered, that the problem for the wealthy and aristocratic members of society is how to stand out for more than a few hours at a time from the mob.

Clothing is losing its possibilities as a decorative factor. Where all are similarly decorated there is no virtue in decoration. The value of clothing as a means of securing the respect, the attention and the envy of others, and consequently of satisfying the innate lust for power and the narcissism inherent in most individuals, is a definitely declining value. There is indeed a distinct fear that the remnants of its value may quickly disappear.

And so there is observable a tendency to return to semi-nudity or to complete nudity in an effort to get away from the mob, and reassert the dignity of the individual. This is an aspect of the nudity movement altogether unconnected with health or naturism ; and it is an aspect not to be overlooked. Naturally, it only applies in a society such as at present prevails in Europe and America. In any society where nudism is the rule and not the exception the spectacularity of nakedness is non-existent.

CHAPTER IV

HEALTH AND NUDITY

“Living organisms of all kinds are dependent for their existence upon the radiant energy of the sun”—T. HOWARD PLANK.

I

THERE can be no manner of doubt that man was never ordained by Nature, God, or whatever you like to call the governing force of the cosmos, to wear clothes. So much is evident from the evidence we have already examined. We have also seen how the practice of covering the body originated. We are well aware of its development under the ægis of Christianity.

It does not necessarily follow, however, that Nature's original ordinance is incapable of improvement. We have enough experience of how man has improved, in countless directions, on Nature. How then does the practice of covering the major portion of the

human frame improve, interfere with, or damage, Nature's original dispensation? Let us see.

For the moment we will leave aside any question of morality. At this particular juncture we are concerned with health, and with health alone.

Man's existence in a healthy state is dependent mainly upon the sun and the atmosphere. He cannot live at all for any extended period without light and air. The researches and experiments of Quincke and Behring have demonstrated beyond any possibility of error that the oxygen consumption of living cells is very greatly intensified and extended where there is exposure to light. In view of the part which oxygen plays in cellular activity, this point, in itself, is one of immense significance.

It may be stated specifically and as an incontrovertible fact that, except as regards a small minority, and on certain special occasions and for curtailed periods, we all wear a good deal more clothing than is necessary or advisable. We do this in winter and in summer, indoors and outdoors, by day and during the night.

The result of wearing too much clothing, or

unsuitable clothing, is to surround the skin with an unhealthy atmosphere, to clog up the pores and prevent or seriously impair their action. The unexposed human skin, thus deprived of light, is in a situation analogous to that of a plant growing in a cellar—it becomes morbifical and anæmic, and in comparison with that of the face and hands has the appearance of being afflicted with marasmus.

In addition to preventing the access of pure air to the skin itself, the custom of wearing clothes inevitably tends to increase the risk of contracting colds and allied disorders through the fact that, with rare exceptions, all articles of clothing are damp to some degree. The materials of which clothes are made absorb moisture from the air. Some materials have greater absorbing powers than others ; in instance, wool and silk take from the atmosphere far more moisture than cotton does. One can obtain proof of this by noting the way in which wool underclothing absorbs the perspiration of the body more quickly and in greater quantities than does cotton. In the absorption of perspiration there is no danger. The risk of contracting chills is in putting on clothing which is damp through

lying about in a moist atmosphere. In such circumstances the moisture-laden garments, in the process of drying, chill the body. When one considers that the atmosphere in England is nearly always saturated with moisture, it will be realised that it is almost impossible to avoid the presence of moisture, to some extent, in one's clothing. Thus the more clothing one wears the greater the risk. Conversely, the nearer the approach to nudity the less the liability to the ill effects of drying damp clothing by means of body heat. One can, of course, avoid any such risk by thoroughly drying one's clothes immediately before putting them on. Incidentally, sun-bathers should dry their clothes in the rays of the sun *before* resuming them.

The ill effects of wearing too many, or unsuitable, or damp clothes, are added to by the general habit of sitting about, still over-clothed, in badly ventilated rooms, breathing for hours on end a humid, stagnant atmosphere, which, often enough, is laden with disease-producing microbes. It is here that we touch the reason for the greater prevalence of disease in winter than in summer: the epidemics of colds, influenza, catarrh, bronchitis and the like. The blame for these

disorders is placed upon the cold and damp weather. True enough, climatic conditions are responsible, but it is an indirect and avoidable responsibility rather than a direct and unavoidable one. It is not the cold itself that causes the contraction of these diseases—they result from the habit of spending the major portion of the day in stuffy, warm rooms, breathing moist poisoned air, and then going straight into a cold sunless atmosphere. There are the strongest possible grounds for the belief that the ravages of influenza in the winter months are due to the lack of fresh air and sunshine. It is not that the influenza germ disappears during the summer months, but that it is kept at bay, vanquished or vitiated, by the individual's powers of resistance, induced or extended by the more healthy life he is able to lead.

Sunlight in combination with fresh pure air together constitute Nature's greatest safeguards against disease, performing the double action of building up the power of skin and the body to resist disease and destroying the bacteria in connection with existing infections.

The effect of coloured light on individuals is known in a general sense, although there

are many points in connection with it which call for research and consideration. Some colours soothe, others depress, others again irritate.¹ The proverbial saying connected with the red rag and the bull is not without foundation. The deficiency of light during the winter months, apart from the stimulation it imparts to germ development, has a singularly depressing influence on the individual.

Every unprejudiced observer is well aware of the great improvement in the health and physique of the modern girl since she began to discard the major portion of that mass of clothes which woman, through the centuries, has been accustomed to wear. The open neck, the gossamer stockings, the thin and scanty underclothing, have all had a great deal to do with this improvement.

II

We have seen that the ancient Greeks and Romans were well aware of the benefits of

¹ Plank, referring to the effects of light, says "Cleaves quotes a Russian physician as stating that the Czarist government put the alert, intelligent socialists in rooms where only blue or higher frequencies were allowed to enter. The results were depression of spirit and a benumbing of the mental faculties sufficient to make intelligent, consecutive thinking impossible"—T. Howard Plank, *Actinotherapy and Allied Physical Therapy*, Manz, Chicago, 1926, p. 48

exposure of the human body to the sun, and that the sun-bath (called *heliosis*), where the body, entirely nude except for a protective covering worn on the head, was exposed to the sun's rays for a certain period each day, formed part of the daily programme. It must, however, be borne in mind that these ancients were unaware of the existence of the ultra-violet and infra-red rays ; they had no technique, in the sense of present-day ray technique. In other words, the best of them had no explanation worthy of the name to offer as to why sunlight was beneficial to the human body.

In view of this the dour puritanical fathers of the Christian Church had little difficulty in finding grounds for their condemnation of this exposure of the nude body as a relic of the ancient pagan sun-worship. And so, gradually but surely, their censure of nudity as licentious and sinful gained strength ; and although, as we have seen, there were, in the early centuries of Christianity, no legal statutes prohibiting nudity so long as the sexual parts were suitably covered, it ranked as a vice, and a salacious vice at that.

Thus, from the dawn of Christianity, we

find the beneficial effects of the sun's rays unknown and unsung for the best part of a thousand years. So far as can be ascertained, no physician or scientist rediscovered the healing powers of the sun's rays until John of Gaddesden in the fourteenth century subjected a son of King Edward I to light treatment; and Faure, some four hundred years later, treated ulcers of the leg by exposure to the sun. He published the results of his treatment in a treatise issued in 1774. Then, in the year of grace 1800, the scientific world was startled by the momentous discovery made by Herschel in the course of his experiments in connection with the spectrum. The constitution of white light had been known for over a century, in fact ever since Newton's discovery of the spectrum. But that there existed any solar rays other than the visible rays was undreamed of. Sir John Herschel had the honour of discovering the infra-red invisible rays while testing the relative heating capacities of the various rays constituting the visible spectrum. And a year or so later, Ritter, the German chemist, made another equally sensational and even more important discovery. He discovered the existence of the

invisible short rays which are known to the world to-day as the ultra-violet rays.

It may be well to give here a brief description of the composition of light, for the benefit of those unacquainted with the spectrum and its analysis. White light is composed of a number of rays of different wavelengths, which, on passing through a prism, give the well-known colours of the spectrum: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. It is not the prism, through which the light passes, which gives to the rays their colours. Colour is dependent on wavelengths and degrees of vibration. The rays which are invisible to us may be visible to the eyes of other forms of animal life. The red rays are the longest and hottest; the violet rays are the shortest and coolest. The rays of these various wavelengths giving the colours of the spectrum constitute the visible rays. For long after the discovery of the spectrum it was thought that visible light constituted the whole of the sun's rays, and it was not until Herschel's and Ritter's researches resulted in the discovery of other solar rays, some, called the infra-red, longer than the long visible rays which produce red when passed through the prism; and others, called the

ultra-violet, shorter than the short visible rays producing violet, that an explanation of the therapeutic properties of sunlight became possible. There are, too, other more recently discovered rays, such as the Rontgen rays, and the rays used in wireless telegraphy, but these do not concern us here.

The result of the discovery of these invisible rays was to turn once more the attention of medical men and scientists to the possibilities of the sun's rays in the treatment of disease. Thus Loebel, in the year of Waterloo, invented an appliance called a "hot air bath," which he used for local application of the sun's rays in the treatment of certain distempers. In the same year Cauvin prescribed sunlight as a method of treating debilitating diseases. Years later, Gregory used the infra-red rays for healing purposes; Turck advocated sun-baths for many maladies, so did Rosenbaum. In 1885, Rickli, a Swiss, in a scientific monograph entitled *The Atmosphere Cure*, made the first serious attempt to give publicity to sun- and air-bathing; while about the same time Florence Nightingale accidentally discovered that certain Crimean war victims who were being treated in the open air made more rapid

steps towards recovery than did the indoor patients. Also Bownes and Blunt, in 1877, had announced that sunlight was a bactericide of much potency.

These attempts, however, to gain popularity for the sun as a health-giver and disease healer, were all more or less sporadic, and met with little in the way of success. The advocates of the "sun cure" were looked upon as quacks, or fanatics, or stunt merchants.

And so we skip some half-century or so, during which the "sun cult" made little or no headway, and come to 1890, when Dr. Adrian Palm announced that the exposure to sunlight of rickety children was followed by marked improvement. This was the beginning of modern attention being directed to the virtues of sun and air as therapeutic agents. Three years after Dr. Palm's startling pronouncement, Finsen started using artificial light for the treatment of lupus and surgical tuberculosis. The attention of the whole medical and scientific worlds was concentrated on the Finsen experiments in Copenhagen, and in 1899 Dr. Sequira began work in the London Hospital with a Finsen lamp. The next step was the opening at

Leysin, Switzerland, in 1903, of the Rollier clinic for the treatment of surgical tuberculosis and other diseases by exposure to the sun's rays. This, the first clinic of its kind, has since become world famous; and although the Alpine slopes, owing to the purity of the atmosphere, are peculiarly fitted for outdoor sun-ray treatment, other places have been selected for the establishment of similar clinics, and have proved eminently successful. In England the clinics founded by Sir Henry Gauvain at Alton in Hampshire and at Hayling Island have turned out to be notably effective and satisfactory. Clinics for the treatment of disease by artificial sunlight can, of course, be established anywhere. In England the first Municipal Sunlight Clinic was started by the Borough of St. Pancras in 1925. Since that date many other cities have followed the example thus provided. So successful have these establishments proved, that sun-ray therapy, as it is called, is now a recognised part of modern medical treatment; and the value of sunlight, both natural and artificial, as a preventive and a healer of disease is definitely established and widely recognised.

III

The main difference between the "sun cult" of to-day and the "sun cult" of the time of Hippocrates lies in the fact that modern science is able to explain why the rays of the sun are beneficial to the human body in health and in disease ; with the result that in place of the crude and haphazard exposures of two thousand years ago, medical men who have mastered the principles and technique of heliotherapy are in a position to control it, and apply it to the treatment and cure of specific diseases. Sun-ray treatment can no longer be lightly and contemptuously dismissed as so much quackery.

We have seen that the sun emits rays of various wavelengths, constituting what is known as light, and, in addition, invisible rays known as the infra-red and ultra-violet rays. The beneficial effects of the sun upon the growth, development and health of the human organism generally, depend upon the whole of the various rays working in combination. It is a popular error to assume that any beneficial effects are due to the ultra-violet rays alone, or to the visible rays alone, or to the infra-red rays alone. It is true that, in

certain specific diseases or conditions, treatment with ultra-violet rays, either alone or in predominating force, is essential ; but, for the moment, we are dealing with the value of sun-bathing to the average individual in normal health, and not with its therapeutic aspect.

Roughly speaking, sunlight is composed of visible rays, infra-red rays and ultra-violet rays in the proportions of 13 per cent., 80 per cent. and 7 per cent. respectively. Thus it will be seen that in the most favourable circumstances the proportion of infra-red or heat-generating rays far exceeds the visible and ultra-violet rays—where the conditions are such that the ultra-violet rays are absorbed by the atmosphere, as on foggy days anywhere, and every day in cities and towns, the relative proportion of infra-red rays increases.

Each of these kinds of ray has its particular qualities. The visible rays have far greater penetrating powers than have the other constituents of sunlight. According to Kinney, visible rays penetrate human tissue to the extent of from one to one and a half inches. They have a decidedly stimulating effect on the exposed skin, increase the

metabolism, and raise the body temperature. Pigmentation of the skin, which forms an absolute barrier to the penetrability of the ultra-violet rays, has no such effect in the case of visible rays; a point demonstrated by Kinney of New York in experiments with negroes and white-skinned men.¹

The main action of the infra-red rays is the production of heat at the point of absorption. These rays are absorbed by the skin, and it is through over-heating of the brain, induced by too-long-continued exposure to sunlight, rich in infra-red rays, that the condition known as sunstroke occurs. The infra-red rays and also the visible rays penetrate the clothing, if not too thick or close in texture. They are absorbed by water, a fact which does much to explain the relative coldness of wet days even in the summer months.

The short ultra-violet rays are almost entirely devoid of any heating properties, and they are invisible. They are absorbed by fog and smoke, by glass and by clothing: the thinnest gauze is sufficient to provide an impenetrable barrier, so that it will be readily

¹ Ultra-violet rays, on the other hand, have far more effect on light-skinned races than on negroes. Similarly, in blondes the skin more rapidly shows erythema and blisters much more quickly than in dark-skinned and darker-complexioned individuals.

understood that most individuals deprive themselves for the best part of their lives of the beneficial effects of these rays. Their action on the human body is twofold. First, there is their direct action on the skin surface exposed to the rays ; second, there is the indirect action induced through the blood stream and affecting the whole metabolism. The ultra-violet rays cannot penetrate to any depth—they cannot, for instance, invade the tissues as can the visible light rays—their action being limited to the epidermis. But Finsen proved that these rays were absorbed by the blood stream ; and, later, Steenbock showed that, in addition to the blood stream, chlorestrol, the name given to a substance which is present in the human skin and tissue, is also an absorbent of ultra-violet rays and is thereby energised and activated, with beneficial therapeutic results. These discoveries were of profound significance. The inability of the ultra-violet rays to penetrate beyond the surface had been thought to constitute a definite limitation to their value, and had been made much of by those who contended that ray therapy was so much quackery. The observed beneficial results from exposure had been incapable of proper explanation,

and there had been more than an insinuation that, as in the case of so many much-vaunted "galvanic cures," mesmeric and hypnotic treatments, *et al.*, the explanation owed much to suggestion. The experiments and researches of Finsen, Steenbock and McCollum, however, did much to clear up the mystery. Anything which affects the blood stream clearly affects all parts of the human frame. And simultaneously with its explanatory role this discovery opened up new possibilities in the way of treatment of diseases which had before been considered quite outside the scope of sunlight therapy.

While all rays from the sun are to a certain extent bactericidal, and may be looked upon as the enemies of infection and disease, just as darkness is favourable to the spread of infection, it is the ultra-violet rays which are far and away the most effective, and which possess the specific power of actually destroying bacteria.¹ It must, however, be kept well in mind that anything which possesses the power of killing bacteria may also, if the dose is powerful enough, damage or destroy human tissue. It is for this reason that the

¹ So far as is at present known ultra-violet radiation, if in sufficient quantity, destroys all forms of bacteria with the exception of spirochetes.

epidermis is so often injured or destroyed during sun-bathing. And it is for this reason, too, that where sun-bathing is practised for the cure of disease it should be under the direction of competent advice. In this connection, Plank says : “ Herein lies the scientific application of radiation therapy—to use a sufficient intensity and duration to kill or damage the bacilli, but not so intense as to harm the cells of the body.”¹

Now much of the radiation emitted by the sun never so much as reaches the earth ; it is either shut off or absorbed by the atmosphere, the extent of this shutting off or absorption depending upon many factors, chief of which are local atmospheric conditions, altitude, and time of the year. In England, for instance, for six months out of the twelve, the human body, in any circumstances, is deprived of the benefits of ultra-violet radiation. The strength of the sun, even on the sunniest day that may occur from October to March, is too feeble in ultra-violet rays to prove of any benefit whatever. Smoke, too, proves an effectual barrier to the short ultra-violet rays, and in consequence, even in

¹ T. Howard Plank, *Actinotherapy and Allied Physical Therapy*, p. 62.

summer, in all large towns and cities, such, for instance, as London, Birmingham, Manchester, Cardiff, Liverpool, Glasgow, Leeds, *et al.*, the inhabitants are deprived of the health-giving ultra-violet rays.

It is a different matter entirely where there is no smoke-permeated air to absorb the valuable ultra-violet rays. For instance, in the Alpine regions there is no such obstruction; nor is there in the mountains of Colorado. In England we have no areas which can quite compare with the Alps or with Colorado, but at the seaside, and especially on the southern coast, we can get something approaching these ideal positions. Next to the seaside ranks the country: here there is sufficient ultra-violet radiation to effect strikingly beneficial results.

It must, however, be observed that the beneficial effects of sunlight, not only in a general sense as affecting the health of the human body, but as a curative agent in certain diseases, depend not solely on the short ultra-violet rays, but also, to a lesser and contributory extent, on the visible and the infra-red rays, which are, too, of definite therapeutic value. The effect of the air, in addition, is not to be overlooked. It is, in

fact, in the combination of fresh air playing on the skin and keeping it healthy, of the heat-giving infra-red rays, and of the cell-stimulating ultra-violet rays, that the great value of the sun-bath lies. In the ordinary way few individuals ever, in any real sense or for any length of time, get this valuable combination. They get, often enough, the fresh air and the infra-red rays, but through the fact of wearing clothes or of protecting themselves with window-glass, they get no ultra-violet radiation whatever.

IV

Sunlight itself has its limitations as well as its advantages. So has artificial light. Generally speaking, where the young, healthy, and active are concerned, outdoor exposure to the sun has all in its favour and little against it. In the treatment of some diseases, too, where fresh air is an essential part of such treatment, outdoor therapy is indicated. But in most cases of disease, artificial light treatment has many advantages.

The trouble with sunlight treatment in the open is the fact of its extreme uncertainty: even in the most favourable conditions, such,

for instance, as in the Swiss Alps, where one can get away from the smoke, the dust and the fog, this uncertainty exists. Nature is nothing if not erratic. One day may be admirable for treatment, the next day may be the reverse, and in consequence the treatment is interrupted, prolonged and retarded.

These disadvantages are absent in artificial-light therapy. Here, the source of radiation is fixed, its power is the same every hour of every day, it is under the direct and immediate control of an operator who can regulate it according to the specific needs of the case under treatment, and there is no difficulty in ensuring that the rays strike the exposed skin area at the correct angle, which is approximately ninety degrees.¹

Then again, the ultra-violet rays produced artificially are the shorter rays which are absent from sunlight, being absorbed before they ever reach the earth. These short rays have greater powers of penetrating living tissue; they possess, in a markedly higher degree, analeptic and antipyric properties, and they exert much more powerful and

¹ If the rays strike the skin at a greater angle than ninety degrees there is the risk that few of them will be absorbed

quicker bactericidal action than do the sun's rays.¹

Another disadvantage of sunlight in connection with clinical work is the mixture of visible light and infra-red rays with the ultra-violet rays. As will be seen later, visible light is a valuable auxiliary in ultra-violet therapy, but its value is dependent upon its degree of controllability. Visible light at the right time is a great help; visible light at the wrong time is a definite hindrance. The light waves constituting the part of the spectrum which approaches the ultra-violet region, and which constitute a considerable portion of bright sunlight, are largely responsible for producing the pigmentation which in so many cases brings clinical treatment to a sudden termination. This pigmentation can be controlled or avoided in artificial-light treatment. The infra-red rays, which vary in intensity from day to day according to atmospheric and other conditions, unless their effects are controlled by regulated exposure indicated by the individual's reaction to these heat-producing rays, may cause sunstroke.

Perhaps the most sensational effects of the

¹ According to Jansen, ultra-violet rays will destroy bacteria embedded up to two inches deep in living tissue

sun cure are in the treatment of rickets and of surgical tuberculosis. It has been established that rickets is the result of defective nutrition in combination with lack of sunlight and fresh air. There was a time when children afflicted with rickets were treated with cod-liver oil and given outdoor exercise, the cod-liver oil being credited with the main share of the beneficial results accruing, until Dr. Adrian Palm pointed out that rickets is a disease due to lack of light, and that exposure to the sun's rays constitutes a definite cure. Thus, the slum dwellings in big cities, in which so many children are reared, represent an atmosphere devoid of light and fresh air, and above all, devoid of the valuable ultra-violet rays which, almost wholly, are prevented from passing through ordinary window-panes.

It has, too, been definitely established that sunlight is a cure for surgical tuberculosis; that is, tubercular conditions of the skin, joints and bones. Ulcers and abscesses, boils, carbuncles, phlyctenules, eczema, erysipelas, and impetigo can be cured; beneficial results have been secured (according to Plank¹ and

¹T. Howard Plank, *Actinotherapy and Allied Physical Therapy*.

Beaumont¹) in cases of cellulitis, marasmus, mastitis and osteomyelitis; and the ultra-violet rays have also considerable therapeutic value in all diseases caused through metabolic deficiencies or irregularities, such as glycosura and hyperthyroidism. Sir William Arbuthnot Lane has drawn attention to the value of sunlight in the treatment of sterility in women.

The bactericidal power of the ultra-violet rays and their stimulation of cellular activity, resulting in the augmented ability of the blood to destroy or mitigate the attacks of bacteria, proves extremely effective in many cases of wounds. In his valuable treatise on sunlight treatment of surgical tuberculosis and other conditions, Rollier points out that in the treatment of suppurating wounds, even given the best of dressings, there is difficulty with the drainage, as any form of dressing, seeing that it must necessarily interfere with the flow of discharge from the wound, encourages the retention of toxins and their subsequent absorption. "Two conditions," says Dr. Rollier, "favourable to the breeding of bacteria are constantly maintained on the

¹ William Beaumont, *Fundamental Principles of Ray Therapy*, Lewis, 1931

wound surface, namely moisture and lack of light.”¹ It is, therefore, readily seen that sun treatment, in view of the excellent bactericidal properties of the ultra-violet rays, constitutes a great advance on the older methods of treatment.

Experimental work is being done in connection with the treatment of other diseases, and we may with some confidence expect great developments in the future. There are grounds for thinking that ray therapy is yet in its infancy.

It is, however, as a help or supplement to orthodox modes of treatment that the great value of natural- or artificial-light treatment is indicated. It is not intended to displace the surgeon's knife or the physician's drugs.

¹ A Rollier, *Heliotherapy*, 2nd edition, Oxford Medical Publications, 1927

CHAPTER V

SEX AND NUDITY

"In my opinion there is nothing else in the world so beautiful as the form of a beautiful maiden woman—nothing. But the place for a woman's body to be denuded is in the privacy of her own apartments with the blinds down"—ANTHONY COMSTOCK

I

THE basis of Puritanism, and incidentally of its sycophantic satellites, censorship and Comstockery, is hatred. It is because of this basic factor that the whole field in which Puritanism works is an amorphous one, and that the objects which the Puritans assail with the ferocity and pertinacity of fanatics are ever-changing ones and incapable of definition. Every Puritan, every moralist, every vice-crusader, talks of obscenity, but no one attempts, or can successfully attempt, to define it. The representatives of half the Governments of the world, in solemn conclave, at the International Conference on

Obscene Publications, held at Geneva in 1923, tried to define obscenity and, after much argument, decided that it was indefinable.¹

The Puritan can give his own individual definition of obscenity only, which definition may, and probably does, differ from the definition of a contemporary brother Puritan, and will probably be entirely different from that arrived at by a Puritan of another age or in another country.

This concept of obscenity is conditioned by the individual's desire to prevent anyone else enjoying what he lacks the moral courage to enjoy himself—it represents the dog-in-the-manger attitude *in excelsis*. It always manifests itself in connection with what is *verboten* in respectable circles, what can only be enjoyed surreptitiously. The whole thing works in a vicious circle. Naturally, inevitably, therefore, obscenity is always connected with sex, sex with obscenity. D. H. Lawrence,

¹ The Conference sat from August 31st to September 12th, and the verbatim report of the debates occupies some 120 foolscap pages of type. Incorporated in the final resolution is the following. "After careful examination of the question as to whether it is possible to insert in the Convention a definition of the word 'obscene' which would be acceptable to all the States, the Conference came to a negative conclusion and recognised, like the Conference of 1910, that each State must be allowed to attach to this word the signification which it might consider suitable."

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in his masterly discussion of pornography,
says :

“No matter how hard we may pretend otherwise, most of us rather like a moderate rousing of our sex. It warms us, stimulates us like sunshine on a grey day. After a century or two of Puritanism, this is still true of most people. Only the mob-habit of condemning any form of sex is too strong to let us admit it naturally. And there are, of course, many people who are genuinely repelled by the simplest and most natural stirrings of sexual feeling. But these people are perverts who have fallen into hatred of their fellow men : thwarted, disappointed, unfulfilled people, of whom, alas, our civilisation contains so many. And they nearly always enjoy some unsimple and unnatural form of sex excitement, secretly.”¹

And so it goes on. The moralists, the Puritans, the Comstockians, are largely responsible for any filthiness associated with sex by their policy of driving it into corners and encouraging perversions and abnormalities. The more they can eradicate or reduce their own cravings and the more they can induce so-called respectable members of society to confine their sexual orgies to circumstances

¹ D H Lawrence, *Pornography and Obscenity*, Faber and Faber, 1929, p 10

surrounded by the closest secrecy, the more apparently successful will be their campaign against immorality. "Indecency," said the late Lord Brentford, "in itself is, of course, not a crime : herein it differs from those acts which are criminal in themselves, such as theft or murder. But exactly in the same way as murder is a crime, so indecency committed in public is a crime."¹

Precisely! It is all right so long as you don't make a song about it, say the Government, the Puritans, the clergy, the vice-crusaders, in effect. And so long as it must be committed in secret, the act itself ranks as a sin. The vicious circle all over again!

But once the one-time sinful act takes on the mantle of respectability, the Puritan's campaign against it ends completely and dismally. This is what has happened in relation to certain so-called educational aspects of sex, to birth-control propaganda, to the discussion of venereal disease. In the early days, when sex books were written by biologists, doctors and journalists, the Puritans rose gleefully in arms, accused the authors of all such works of being libidinous monsters, and had them

¹ Viscount Brentford, *Do We Need a Censor?*, Faber and Faber, 1920, p. 5.

promptly jailed and their books burned. Recently, however, there appeared on the bookstalls pamphlets and books dealing with sexual subjects, written by clergymen or prefaced by sermons on the need for sex education for the young and the ignorant. The Puritans looked at one another in dismay. They found their guns spiked with a vengeance. Analogously, in certain European countries, much the same thing has happened or is happening as regards nudity. Here health is the key-note that the propagandist strikes with tireless reiteration. But he has always a hard battle before him. Nudity in any complete sense, health or no health, seems a difficult mouthful to swallow. Especially is this so, as we shall see, in Puritan England and in Comstockian America.

II

You have only to so much as mention nudity in the average household for each member to hold up both hands in extravagant horror at the bare thought of it. Even in this enlightened age, the nude is still considered to be restricted to a few abandoned hussies

who pose for artists in Chelsea, and a handful of savages in Central Africa and in Polynesia who don't know any better.

The horror of nudity is really the horror of *sexual* nudity. It all arose with the concept of the sinfulness and uncleanness of the sex act and of the sexual parts, ordained, inculcated and reiterated with tireless industry by Saint Paul, his satellites and his disciples. Starting with the protection from public gaze of the sexual apparatus, it gradually extended in its scope as the Christian Fathers hammered home their dictum that any part of the human body which was graceful or beautiful in curve or outline served to arouse passion in those who chanced to see it. Thus, in woman in particular, the danger zone was extended from the pubic region to pretty nearly the whole carcass—the breasts, the legs, the ankles, were all completely and carefully covered. This Pauline doctrine reached its apogee, and at the same time its supreme ridiculousness, in the objection of Erasmus to nudity even in isolation, on the grounds that the sight of the naked body would shock the susceptibilities and æsthetic principles of the angels.

The old property right of the husband in

the wife also had something to do with it. Man argued, illogically, it is true, but none the less surely and heatedly, that clothing acted as a protective agent in respect of woman's virtue—forming a sort of vicarious chastity belt. In accordance with the current reactions of his kind, and with the memory big in him of the ideas that he flourished during his bachelor days, he has always been wont to trace a definite connection between the approach to nakedness in woman and her morals. He never expected to see his wife's naked body, but he both expected and demanded to see the naked body of a prostitute as part of the programme he paid for. The tale which Wedekind tells of the man who, calling unexpectedly on a friend and surprising him in bed with a woman, failed to recognise as that of his own wife the naked body which was exhibited from the neck down for his admiration, cannot be looked upon as an altogether impossible fabrication.

The place of the sex taboo in the reaction of the average individual to nudity is clearly seen in the way in which nothing shameful or indecent is associated with the total nakedness of the new-born infant, often photographed in the nude for the admiration

of relatives and friends; or the partial nudity of children up to the age of puberty.

The growth of the child represents a gradual education in, and development of, sexual shame and disgust. Starting off with excrementary and urinary disgusts thoroughly instilled during the years of infancy, there follows the development of the policy of concealment of the anal and pubic regions long before any conscious realisation of the sex motif can possibly be arrived at. With the arrival of puberty there is coincidentally present, in all normal individuals, a keen interest in what has been suppressed or concealed. It is Eve's desire to taste the forbidden fruit that crops up generation after generation in every boy and girl, every man and woman. It is not a healthy curiosity, but an unhealthy one. Its essence is morbidity or pruriency, according to the peculiar environment in each individual case.

III

The ambivalency of the human mind is never more thoroughly exposed and illustrated than in this reaction to nudity of the

average person. There is the feeling of horror or shame, as the case may be, at the thought of allowing the public to see one's uncovered body, based on the nineteen centuries of Christian teaching, and drummed into one from the time of infancy; and there is the intense curiosity to see the opposite sex in a state of nudity, based upon the allurements and attraction of the unknown and forbidden. The dualistic concept of shame and curiosity, repugnance and attraction, applies almost universally in regard to the opposite sex; in a minority of cases it applies additionally to one's own sex. "I am told," says Havelock Ellis, "there is often difficulty in getting men to pose nude to women artists."¹ The same authority also mentions that Sir Jonathan Hutchinson found it necessary to "exclude lady members of the medical profession from the instructive demonstrations at his museum 'on account of the unwillingness of male patients to undress before them.'"²

It was inevitable that as a corollary to the belief in the sexual lure of the nude there should arise the concept that the height of feminine modesty was represented by the

¹ Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, Vol I, p 75.

² *Ibid.*

rigorous concealment of the flesh, and the adoption of garments designed to turn any signs of grace into amorphous outlines. Thus the garments of the nun, of the Quaker, of the policewoman, of the Salvation Army official.

Arising out of all this is the need for those who practise nudity to take elaborate precautions that no human beings, especially of the female sex, who are not themselves *nude* witness their unclothed bodies. There is no law against nudity practised in strict privacy; that is, behind the closed doors and drawn curtains of one's private residence, or where there is no possibility of being seen by an onlooker who happens to disapprove of nudity—in an outdoor enclosure effectually screened from the curious eyes of Peeping Toms, for instance; or on an uninhabited island. ;

But nudity in public or in circumstances where any outsiders may catch a glimpse of a completely naked body, is entirely another thing, and may lead to trouble with the authorities. In fact, apart from the social obloquy attached to police court proceedings, it may very easily lead to a heavy fine or even to imprisonment. Such proceedings usually

come under Section 4 of the Vagrancy Act of 1824, wherein wilful exposure of the person "with intent to insult any female" constitutes a punishable offence. This means that any woman who sees, accidentally or otherwise, a naked person, either in a public place or on private property, and who claims to be insulted by such an exhibition, can, under the Act, secure a conviction against the offender. Nudity can also be proceeded against as "indecent exposure" where there may be no question of intent "to insult any female" if the offence occurs in the street or any other place to which members of the public have common access.

IV

The so widely expressed fear, whenever the question of nudity crops up, that it must of necessity, in all cases where the sexes come together, lead to immorality and sexual degeneration, is altogether fallacious. The general expression of such a view merely shows how ignorant are the mass of the people as to the causes which lead to the arousing and extending of sexual desires and appetites.

Nudity *per se* has little or no power as an aphrodisiac. The charm of nudity lies solely in its concealment, or its rarity : in other words, in the fact of nudity being tabooed. Its charm is on a par with the charm of pornography, of Sunday-night plays, of French postcards, of sexual perversions. Nudity, as we have seen, possesses no charm for the Congo savages, or the Australian Blacks, or the Papuans of Melanesia. To the contrary, here the charm lies in clothing ; and as we have seen, too, one of the primary and most influential factors in the evolution of clothing was the need to adopt some form of ornamentation to attract the attention and arouse the desire of the opposite sex.

In its nascency we see the sexual lure conveyed by ornamentation in the painting of the face and body which is in vogue among so many savage and primitive races all over the world. The girls paint themselves when seeking a husband, and the men adopt an analogous practice when hunting for wives. There are many examples of these practices given by Westermarck in his *History of Human Marriage*. In most instances painting and ornamentation of the skin by tattooing,

scarification and mutilation have preceded the wearing of clothing.

With the development of dress both in the extent of its concealment of the body and in the degree of its ornateness, permanent forms of decoration (i.e. scarification, mutilation, and tattooing) have declined. Painting, however, and the wearing of ornaments, have continued to exist and to develop coincidentally with the evolution of clothes. In these modern days throughout the civilised world, the painting of the face, lips and nails of woman has reached degrees of universality and skill never before known. Nor is woman in any circumstances inclined to dispense with these forms of decoration. In this connection, there is a significant passage in Dr. Parmelee's account of his experiences of nudism :

"During our gymnosophic practices the women often wear bands or garlands of flowers around their heads, usually retain such jewellery as they are in the habit of wearing, such as rings, bracelets, ear-rings, and necklaces, and sometimes don slippers with brightly coloured ribbons. More rarely they drape a transparent veil about the shoulders."¹

¹ Maurice Parmelee, *Nudity in Modern Life The New Gymnosophy*, Noel Douglas, 1929, p 90.

To gather an adequate idea respecting the true value of dress and ornamentation as sexual aphrodisiacs we have only to turn to the prostitute. The prostitute has always been one of the first to realise the immense importance of dress and other forms of adornment to enhance the charms of the human body, and to arouse the sexual passion of man. There is nothing unnatural in the prostitute being the first to realise clearly the immense importance of this. It is her business to arouse passion. Sex is her trade.

The prostitute knows that the sex appeal of her body can be expressed only in terms of clothes appeal, supplemented by other aphrodisiac devices such as jewellery, rouge, paint, powder, perfume, and the use of her eyes. The successful actress knows all this, too ; so does the society beauty ; and so, in ever-increasing numbers, do women in more orthodox walks of life.

It is true that many of these ladies of joy and their imitators appear in varying states of semi-nudity. But there is a difference, vast and profound, between semi-nudity and complete nudity. There is no suggestiveness in nakedness ; there is no hint of the mysterious, the ineffable, the unknown, which

constitute the lure of sex. It was because he fully realised this that Montaigne said that a complete survey of the naked body was recognised as a sovereign remedy for the passion of venery. It was through a precisely similar conviction that Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* stated that "the greatest provocations of lust are from the apparel."

It is because of all this that the semi-nudity of the bathing-beach in vogue to-day is far more dangerous to morals than complete nudity would be.

If the truth could be got at it is not the lure of "the flesh," as the Church has it, that causes a man to dog the footsteps of a girl through the streets; it is the lure of an elegant fur coat, a stylish hat, a pair of dainty high-heeled shoes, a rouged and powdered face, the enamelled finger-nails of a pair of jewelled hands. Sexual passion may be an inevitable aftermath, but it must be preceded, aroused and excited by one or several of the factors I have indicated. The sight of a badly dressed, down-at-heel, blowsy charwoman, or of a severe-looking, unburnished plain Jane, is insufficient to arouse any kind of passion in the average man.

So true is all this that I think, if the moralists thoroughly realised the anaphrodisiacal influence of the completely naked body, as regards ninety-five per cent. of the population in all circumstances, and as regards the lot in some circumstances, they would sweat at the task of attempting to have nudity made compulsory by Act of Parliament.

CHAPTER VI

NUDITY IN PRACTICE

“Many years of practice have proved to me that no matter how weak an organism may be it can always be revived by sun-treatment”—A ROLLER

I

THE cult of sun-bathing, air-bathing, *Nacktkultur*, *Freikörperkultur*, or whatever precise name it may go by, where is meant a condition of *complete* nudity, is essentially a private affair. Obviously nudity cannot be tolerated in conditions where the nudes are in contact with clothed individuals. The results would be disastrous. The nearest approach to nudity allowable in civilised society in places where others congregate is the bathing-suit or beach-suit seen at the seaside resorts.

Nudity, therefore, can be practised only in the following circumstances or conditions : (1) in the privacy of one's own home ; (2) in

certain enclosures or colonies fully protected from the public gaze; (3) in indoor gymnasia; and (4) in outdoor or indoor medical clinics.

There is a sharp division between the nudity cult which is now sweeping Europe and the United States of America; and medical "sun ray" treatment for certain specific conditions. Ray therapy, as this medical treatment is called, may be looked upon as the forerunner of the nudity movement for healthy individuals. In fact, there are grounds for supposing that no one—not even one of the ultra-moderns—would have inaugurated a nudity cult without the fortifying element of this medical background. When all is said and done it required courage of no mean order (though there are, of course, those who would describe it by another and a harsher name) to fill the role of pioneer in a movement so startling in its outraging of orthodox morality and customs. Without the justification of health improvement it might well have proved a quite impossible task. But the world was talking of Finsen's and Rollier's clinics and their sensational cures, the Press was full of articles on the value of the ultra-violet rays, and all this at

a time when health, outdoor sports, games and fresh-air curative methods were in everyone's mouth, when the public and the authorities were casting more and more lenient eyes on abbreviated bathing-costumes and on mixed bathing itself. The time was most emphatically ripe for the inauguration of the nudity cult.

Germany was the first to take up in all seriousness what was at first termed *Nacktkultur*. Apparently the initial movement commenced soon after Finsen and Rollier made their sensational announcements. It was started as a "natural healing" cult. The pioneer nudists did not find their task an easy one. Naturally enough they had to meet the opposition of powerful interests. Fortunately for the movement there existed in the personages of Paul Zimmerman and Adolf Koch, two individuals who possessed the zeal of fanaticism in combination with true German dogged pertinacity. The history of nudism in Germany, and in fact in the whole of Europe and America, is intimately connected with Zimmerman and Koch. The two worked independently, but each did much to spread the gospel of nakedness.

A quarter of a century ago Paul Zimmer-

man was teaching the young in a German school. He was a vegetarian, a disciple of Nietzsche, something of a literary connoisseur and a lover of the natural life. Well, this country-loving teacher abandoned his profession and became a farmer. With his wife, he moved into the country, where he turned an ancient barn into a residence of sorts, and there, far from Peeping Toms, the two of them practised the back-to-Nature cult, lived on vegetables, roamed about their lonely farm more or less nude, and raised to maturity three girls who scarcely knew what clothes were for. Now when Zimmerman first started his place at Klingberg, it is supremely doubtful if he had so much as the ghost of an idea that it would ever develop into anything more than a flourishing farm for the use of himself and his family—certainly he could have had no notion that in a matter of years it would be known not only throughout the Fatherland, but all over the civilised world to boot, and would be a source of attraction for visitors of every nationality.

The *Freilichtpark* at Klingberg, where, during the summer of 1932, thousands of nudists assembled every week-end, was of twenty years' growth. At first, friends and

relatives only were to be seen at the Zimmermans' home. They became—or most of them did—converts to the cult of nakedness. They asked to be allowed to bring their friends and acquaintances. Zimmerman rose to the occasion like the man of enterprise he is. He put up cottages for the accommodation of visitors ; he welcomed with open arms and with quotations from Nietzsche anyone interested in his experiment. And so the fame of the *Freilichtpark* at Klingberg grew and grew. More cottages were built, more acres were added. Always was there present a miniature army of nudists, consuming vegetables, living a natural life ; and at their head was Zimmerman, happy and energetic, and, queer as it sounds in all conscience, regaling nude men and women with Nietzschean philosophy.

Then there came upon the nudist scene Adolf Koch. What Zimmerman did to popularise nudism in the country, Koch did to popularise it in the city. Strangely enough, Koch, like Zimmerman, was a member of the teaching profession. He was a physical instructor in one of the Berlin schools. Acting without official authority he introduced exercises in the nude state among the children, and for his pains he was relieved of his

position. Koch was no Nietzschean ; to the contrary, he was a socialist. He started a night school for men and women as well as children, and had the lot of these who attended his classes playing games, dancing and exercising, with nothing in the way of covering for their bodies beyond what God gave them. The Koch School, as it was called, was an instantaneous success, so much so, indeed, that an offer by the educational authorities of reinstatement left Koch unmoved. The workers thronged to it, playing and romping to their hearts' content, while fat Adolf, a veritable tornado in the flesh, stimulated them with voice and gesture, and with music drummed out of the piano with his own bulgy fingers. Other Koch schools were started in different parts of Berlin ; the authorities gave permission for the students, as these nudists called themselves, to use one of the public baths. And in addition to the indoor gymnasias which Koch originally started, the organisation provided outdoor nudist parks.

Naturally, the Zimmerman and the Koch experiments, by virtue of their success, were followed by the springing up of similar movements in all parts of Germany.

In the beginning the activities of the

nudists were necessarily very much restricted, and, in the main, their meetings were kept secret. After the war, however, the Government expressed approval of the nudist movement, and all hole-and-corner activities and methods of organisation, so far as public knowledge of their existence was concerned, were abandoned. The only secrecy that did exist was in relation to the actual situation of the country "parks"—a concession partly to the susceptibilities of members and visitors, and partly to local prejudices.

During the decade immediately preceding Hitler's leap to power the movement progressed by leaps and bounds. In Berlin at certain of the public swimming-baths¹ and at certain times, nude bathing was allowed; and a municipal centre² for nude "air-bathing" was opened on Lake Wannsee, just outside the city. Most of the nudist clubs possessed their own private parks or enclosures, usually in the country, where members could spend their leisure hours. Once within the enclosure they divested themselves of every stitch of clothing. Many of the members spent their week-ends in these nudist colonies.

¹ Among these was the famous Lunabad.

² The only charge was ten pfennigs, for the care of the "bather's" clothing



[Keystone View Company]

BUT PERCEP DAY IN A CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

For those who could not get out of the city, and for use during the winter months, the indoor gymnasia were extremely popular—members could discard their clothing, play suitable games and indulge in exercises.

There seems to be a prevalent idea among English people that in Germany anyone may go about naked wherever and whenever they wish, even to the extent of parading the streets in birthday attire. It is a quite fallacious idea. Even when the German nudist movement was at its height, before the coming into power of the Hitler régime, the only respect in which it was more advanced than in England or France or America, was in the permission of *complete nudity* in certain circumstances at all times (as in the *Freikörperkultur* parks); and in certain other circumstances at specified times (as in the case of the municipal baths and gymnasia).

The popularity which the nudity cult in Germany reached during the peak period of 1930 to 1932 may be gauged from the fact that it was a common occurrence on Sundays, in the height of the season, for 100,000 naked persons to be seen at the Wannsee municipal "air-bath." Most of the nudists who used the municipal "parks" belonged to the

working classes, among whom the nudity cult became extremely popular. The wealthier people patronised the private clubs, some of which were extremely expensive. Certain clubs sprang up, too, which, apart from the social position of their clients, restricted membership to those conforming to certain definite æsthetic and medical standards, much on the lines of the apocryphal "Society of Diana" described by Paul Morand in his nudist story, *The Baltic Night*. But with few exceptions, these private organisations were frankly money-making affairs.

It will be noted that in reference to the German nudist movement I have consistently employed the past tense. There is a reason for this. The nudist cult in Germany, officially, at any rate, is no more. In the heyday of its fame, at the peak of its popularity, it has fallen under Government prohibition and censure. Herr Hitler has decreed that nudism in Germany must cease: "The total exposure of the human body is undignified as well as an error of taste." And so far as the legal position is concerned, nudism is allowed only in private enclosures, whether indoor or outdoor. As a result of these official strictures

and restrictions hundreds of nudist groups have vanished.

Whether or not the Nazi Government will succeed in eradicating completely and permanently a movement which numbers its devotees by the hundred thousand, time alone will tell; but at any rate nudism in Germany at the time of writing can only be practised privately and surreptitiously—in other words, the law as regards nudism is the same in Germany as it is in England.

France, credited by Englishmen and Americans with the most notorious morality in Europe, for years has been a long way behind Germany in its nudist movement. For one thing, the French authorities were down on any open manifestations of the cult, and if nudity in any *complete sense* were practised, it had to be done surreptitiously. For some years there has been an authorised naturist park, run by the *Société Naturiste*, on an island at Villennes-sur-Seine, but here only semi-nudity was practised, members wearing slips and brassières. But now, almost simultaneously with the coming into force of the German ban, the French Government has withdrawn all its objections to the practice of nudity, complete and unashamed.

It has given permission for the sun-bathers at Villennes-sur-Seine to throw away their slips and their brassières, and to go the whole hog. More, it has recommended the practice of nudity as a health cult.

In addition to the *Société Naturiste*, there is, too, a nudist society known as *Amis de Vivre*, which promotes circles where true nudism is practised. There is one such circle at Marseilles. There is another at Nice, known as the *Ligue Gymnique de la Côte d'Azur*. The Riviera also boasts a rival nudist society, the *Groupe Gymniste et Naturiste de Nice*. Yet another French nudist organisation is the *Compagnons de l'En Dehors*, with headquarters in Paris and branches in various French cities. In addition, nude bathing is commonly indulged in all along the Riviera coast by visitors and residents who are not members of any clubs or groups.

In Austria there is a progressive Austrian league, the *Gesunde Menschen*, and there are nudist centres in Vienna. Switzerland, too, has its organisations and boasts a nudist park at Lugano. Belgium has its nudist centres at Brussels and Ostend; even Holland, usually so backward in these matters, boasts of an organisation at Amsterdam. In

Russia, in Finland, in Norway, in Sweden, bathing in the nude has been practised for years. In consequence, in none of these countries is there much of an opening for nudity as a definite cult.

In Italy, naturism, as it is called, has been given the blessing of no less a personage than Mussolini himself. The *Unione Naturista Italiana*, started some three years ago, has a large membership, and has promoted centres in Rome, Trieste, Como and Milan. It is a "back-to-Nature" movement, and is not true nudism as practised in Germany. Men must wear slips and women must wear both slips and brassières.

In England, as yet, the movement is in its infancy. The general lack of sun, even in summer, and the notorious treachery of the English climate, restrict the practice to a comparatively short season and to certain favoured spots. There are several societies and leagues for the provision of facilities for nudism, sun-bathing and air-bathing, in the shape of private enclosed grounds in the country, for use during the summer months, and, in certain cases, indoor gymnasia for the winter season. Among the best known of these societies are *The Sun-Bathing Society*,

the *National Sun and Air Association*, and the *Gymnic Association of Great Britain* (an organising body only, to which are affiliated practising groups).

In a few groups complete nudity is practised, but in many societies the rules mostly provide that the men wear trunks and the women slips and brassières. In the case of young children nakedness is permitted. Owing to membership fees and other charges, the movement in Britain is as yet confined to the middle and upper classes—there are no free facilities on the lines of the municipal “bathing-parks,” which Germany has boasted for so many years, and which France is promoting.

In America, as in England, sun-bathers and embryo nudists are feeling their way very carefully. There is a club in New York and another in Chicago, but for the most part any true nudist practices are surreptitious affairs confined to small circles of friends who meet in the strictest privacy.

II

Sun-bathing—at any rate, sun-bathing to the extent of producing any beneficial effects—is not the excessively simple affair it would

appear. To the average individual it simply connotes exposing the partially or wholly uncovered body to the warming effects of the sun's rays, and that is all there is to it. In reality, it is much more than this. For instance, the heating power of the sun's rays is no indication whatever of the presence of the ultra-violet radiation which is so essential a part of sun-ray treatment. As we have seen, the heat comes from the red and infra-red rays, and may be felt during the winter months in towns and cities, and in other circumstances where there is little or no ultra-violet radiation. It can be felt through ordinary window-glass, which absorbs practically the whole of the ultra-violet rays.

Nor would ultra-violet radiation alone (except in the treatment of certain lesions or cutaneous affections by artificial therapy) represent the most beneficial way of taking the sun cure. It would almost inevitably result in serious sun-burning, with destructive effects on the cells and tissue.

As a result of much experiment and prolonged observation, the consensus of authoritative opinion is that to ensure the best results from the practice of sun-bathing, there must be simultaneously exposure of the

whole body to the combined effects of the ultra-violet and the infra-red rays as well as to free moving air. It is because of this that outdoor sun-bathing is infinitely superior to so-called artificial sun-bathing. The artificial light can produce the ultra-violet rays even more effectively than they are available in sunlight, but there are no means by which there can be created artificially the "air-bath" which has so marked an effect. Indeed, the hot, stagnant, and often humid atmosphere created under artificial conditions has often a damaging effect.

In addition, therefore, to the power of the sun, the state of the atmosphere, the period of the year, and the time of the day, we must also take into consideration the local climatic, geographical and environmental conditions. Water and sand reflect the health-giving rays, with the result that the actinic power of sunlight is much greater at the seaside than it is in the country. In a similar way snow reflects the rays, and this, in combination with the clean, pure air of the mountains, provides an explanation for the superior value of the Alpine sunlight.

Additional benefits would also appear to result from environmental changes in combin-

ation with continued sun- and air-bathing. "There appears," according to the experience of Sir Henry Gauvain, "to be both a seasonal and a diurnal variation in response to the stimulus of sunlight." Sir Henry's remarks on this point are illuminating :

"To evoke greater response in cases which need it, the character and intensity of the stimulus should be changed. Thus, with patients who respond well at Alton up to July, but who then commence to flag and make less rapid progress, acceleration is again obtainable if I transfer them to our seaside branch at Hayling. A new type of stimulus produces a notable acceleration of response in those capable of making it. The basal metabolism—shall we call it the 'energy output' of the body?—is enormously increased by altered light conditions with greater exposure to ultra-violet radiations, and by cool sea breezes, and paddling in, spraying with, and immersion in sea water. The whole altered environment plays its part. The different intensity of the light will not alone explain this change; the combination of altered stimuli will. Progress again becomes rapid, provided stimulation is not pressed beyond the subject's capacity for response."¹

¹ Sir Henry Gauvain, *Sun, Air and Sea Bathing in Health and Disease*, reprint of a lecture delivered in the Great Hall of the British Medical Association on February 21st, 1933, and published in the *British Medical Journal*, February 25th, 1933

The effect of sunlight in combination with fresh moving air on the exposed skin of the human body is analogous to that of a tonic on the viscera. It induces greatly enhanced metabolism, with the result that the muscular and nervous systems are toned up, oxidation is increased, absorption is heightened, and the skin and kidneys speed up their work of waste elimination.¹ Little wonder that those who have joined the nudist clubs speak of the beneficial results they have sustained, the increase in muscular and mental energy, the additional zest in life.

Alone, *air-bathing*—that is, exposure of the nude body to the air—is distinctly beneficial; which explains why the nudist, once thoroughly accustomed to and able to stand exposure to an *unpolluted atmosphere*, whether sun-warmed or not, can derive considerable benefit from the practice of nakedness during the winter months and in circumstances where sunlight radiation is comparatively feeble.

In England the best results are obtained during the months of June, July, August and September (always supposing, that is, weather

¹To ensure the best results, the sun-bather should always make a point of drinking large quantities of water daily.

conditions are reasonably normal); and at all times and in all conditions the morning sun is most potent.

The stranger to sun-bathing should approach the thing with some caution. Nothing is to be gained by casting off all one's clothes in a hurry, and exposing the nude body, suddenly and without any preliminary inurement, to the rays of the midday sun. So rash an experiment has often a painful and distressing aftermath in the shape of blistered and peeling skin, even if sunstroke is escaped.

A good deal depends upon age, condition, and the like, but the average individual cannot stand any sudden exposure to the hot sun for any length of time. Here so many persons make their initial mistake. They go to the seaside and expose themselves for extended periods under the sun's rays before the skin has become tolerant to their action. The result is a blistered skin.

It is best to sit in the shade for a time each morning or afternoon, until gradually the body becomes accustomed to air and light. Especially is this procedure advisable if one has lived a sedentary life. The effects of sun-bathing vary tremendously with different individuals, and it may be taken as an axiom

that in all cases are these effects conditioned by the degree of exposure to air and light to which the individual has previously been subjected.

In every case the beginner should commence by exposing a portion of the body only, and for a short period, day by day increasing the amount of nude skin exposed and the length of each exposure. Hans Surén, in his book *Man and Sunlight*, advises the beginner to precede the practice of actual sun-bathing by spending "a few days naked in the open air as far as possible in the shade, so that the skin becomes accustomed to air and light."¹ In any case it is well to avoid midday exposure until one is well accustomed to the sun's rays.

Apart from the physical advisability of preceding complete nudity by partial nudity, there is, in addition, a psychological reason for adopting this method. Few people, even in these days of cigarette-smoking and cocktail-drinking women, have the moral hardihood to bridge the gap between the clothed and the naked state at one big jump. They require to go through a probationary or experimental period, during which their garments are shed

¹ Hans Surén, *Man and Sunlight*, Sollux Publishing Co, 1927.

one by one, until finally these incipient nudists are able to stand before their fellow creatures, as did Adam and Eve, "naked and unashamed." Because of this inherent self-consciousness, modesty, or whatever one likes to call it, I think it is well for the prospective nudist to practise this gradual stripping process in the society of a few intimate friends of like tendencies in private grounds.

In this connection, it may be remarked here that no one, however reluctant or indisposed they may be to allowing anyone to see their naked bodies or witnessing the nudity of others, need for these reasons be debarred from securing the benefits of air-bathing and sun-bathing. They can practise nudity in their own grounds. I think the future will see a vast extension of the practice of nudity in this form. There are many and obvious reasons why a considerable number of persons are debarred from joining clubs and societies where nudists gather.

The aim should be *complete nudity* if the full benefits of light and air are to be secured. The thinnest material is enough to prevent the ultra-violet rays reaching the skin. The bathing-costumes affected by so many semi-

nude posturers, which are allowed to dry on the body while lying in the sun, are likely to promote unhealthy conditions, as will be shown later.

The anointing of the skin with olive oil, coconut oil or vaseline, or indeed any form of greasy unguent, before exposure, prevents sunburn with subsequent blistering and peeling. Natives of the tropical regions oil the skin, the ancient Greeks used an inunction, and many modern advocates of sun-bathing advise this oiling or anointing process as a preliminary to every exposure, until the skin becomes pigmented, when oiling may be discontinued, as after pigmentation, or tanning, as it is popularly called, all danger of sunburn is over. In this practice, however, the beneficial results of sun-bathing are seriously impaired, if they are not altogether precluded or destroyed. Thousands of holiday-makers return to their homes generously tanned, and display this pigmentation as evidence of the benefits they have received from sun-bathing, when, in strict truth, the very fact of this pigmentation is definite evidence to the contrary. It cannot be too thoroughly impressed that sitting in the sun and becoming tanned is in itself no conclusive evidence that one is

being benefited, the notion that the browner the skin the more beneficial the exposure being a fallacy. Similarly, the popular idea that exposure to the sun's rays which does not cause pigmentation is devoid of any beneficial effects is another fallacy. It has already been pointed out that the ultra-violet rays cannot penetrate the most flimsy of coverings—that they cannot, in sufficient degree to have any appreciable effect, pass through window-glass. Neither can they pass through a layer of grease or oil. Pigmentation acts in a somewhat similar manner: it largely nullifies the action of the ultra-violet radiation. Leonard Hill mentions that in New York negro babies are more susceptible to rickets than are white babies; and quotes Hess as finding that for black rats to respond to ultra-violet radiation longer exposure is needed than in the case of lighter-skinned rats.¹ It is because of this that, in medical ray therapy, treatment is discontinued immediately pigmentation occurs, this indicating what is known as the "dead end." Until the skin recovers further dosage with ultra-violet rays is so much waste of time and money.

¹ Leonard Hill, *Sunshine and Open Air*, Edward Arnold, 1925.

Oil or grease, if used at all, should be discontinued after a few days, when the skin has become accustomed to air and light. There are, of course, great variations in the susceptibilities of individuals to pigmentation, but every effort should be made to avoid it in any excessive degree, if the full benefits of the ultra-violet rays are desired. The best method is to keep out of the direct rays of the sun—by sitting and exercising in the shade one can secure all the benefits necessary or desirable from light and air. Certainly sunbathing should always take place where shade is available, so that direct exposure can be alternated with periods of shade. The moment erythema occurs is the signal for the cessation of direct exposure.

There are other reasons why the popular custom of exposing the skin, either of the whole body or of any part of it, until it blisters and peels is positively inadvisable. Peeling is an indication that the skin has been burned. Burns caused by the sun's rays are not in any way different, except as regards the manner of causation, from burns caused by fire or water. The result is destruction of the skin tissue and may have serious effects. Where, however, despite every care,

SUN-BATHING IN A PARIS BATH
[Keystone View Company]



blistering does result, as indeed sometimes does happen where every possible precautionary measure is adopted, there should be no more sun-bathing until the injured areas are healed. They should be kept perfectly dry and dusted with salicylate powder.

Always, when sun-bathing, one should feel comfortable, virile, active. There should be no suggestion of chilliness. If there is, it is time to put on clothing. Sometimes, when exposure is continued until the sun has gone, there may be a slight feeling of chilliness. In such cases, Dr. Parmelee recommends a brisk rub down with a towel before putting on one's clothes, and asserts that in this way he has "practised nudity in the open in a cold northern climate in every month of the year."¹

Common sense enters into the practice of nudity. The middle-aged cannot stand the length and frequency of exposure that the young can. But it is surprising what the human body can stand in the way of exposure to both cold and heat, *provided it is gradually attuned to these unaccustomed temperatures by carefully graduating the length and degree of the exposures.* By these methods one can

¹ Maurice Parmelee, *Nudity in Modern Life The New Gymnosophy.*

eventually practise nudity during the winter months. Sir William Arbuthnot Lane mentions having witnessed in Switzerland the spectacle of nudists lying on the ground at times when the thermometer registered many degrees of frost.

It cannot be too strongly impressed upon the sun-bather that *the great virtue of nudism lies in the exposure of the body to air and sun simultaneously*. For the full benefits to be obtained there should be movement. Thus games, sports, or some forms of work are far better than sitting or lying about quiescent. The ideal is to alternate the one with the other.

Of course, not all games and exercises are suitable where a state of complete nudity prevails. Cricket, football, hockey, and the like, may cause serious injuries, and the exercises recommended by some physical culturists are much too strenuous and risky for the average individual. But among games, tennis, bowls, quoits and skittles are all suitable; while skipping, dancing and most forms of physical exercise which do not involve the use of apparatus are excellent.

Where *exercise and nudity* can be and are combined, the maximum benefits to health

will naturally result. Nothing perhaps equals this combination as a cure for obesity. It is a natural cure. It entails none of the dangers too often connected with the "fasting" and "dieting" systems so much in vogue at the present day. It tends more than any other method that can be devised to the moulding of well-proportioned, active, virile, healthy bodies. Those afflicted with constipation should practise bending exercises and movements with a view to stimulating the muscles of the abdomen—there is no surer and safer remedy for constipation and allied digestive disorders.

Those not in robust health, like those of advancing years, must adopt certain precautionary measures. Thus, if the ground is damp, shoes or sandals should be worn. Anyone who is in any way anæmic should be content with short exposures ; those bothered with kidney or bladder troubles should wear a belt of flannel to protect the vulnerable abdominal parts. All except the very young, when exposed to the midday sun, should wear some sort of head covering ; all, whether young or old, should avoid exposure when the stomach is filled with food.

It may be mentioned here that lying about

on the beach in bathing-suits, exposed to the rays of the sun, is not in any true sense of the word sun-bathing. Holiday-makers regale their friends with tales of the sun-bathing they have enjoyed when, in strict truth, they have never done any sun-bathing at all. Apart from the fact that the flimsiest bathing-suit prevents the ultra-violet rays reaching the skin, this practice of drying the soaked bathing-suit on the body, even in the hottest sun, is harmful. It may, and it often does, cause grave disorders to be contracted, through the fact that the body, in the process of drying, becomes chilled as it is gradually deprived of its store of heat. The abdomen and the loins, perhaps the parts most vulnerable to chills of the whole body, in this way often become affected, especially where there is the slightest predisposition to kidney or bladder trouble.

III

Artificial sunlight is more suitable for therapeutic purposes than for ordinary sun-bathing. The charm and the value of nudity lie mainly in its practice in the open-air. The effects of the atmosphere itself, apart

from the light and heat rays, on the skin, and the breathing of the pure, cool air, go a long way towards making nudism the health- and vigour-promoting cult which, practised out of doors and in proper circumstances, it undoubtedly proves itself to be. Indoor nudity, at best, can prove only a very inferior substitute for sun-bathing in the open. The warm and more or less stagnant air, which, in addition, is often moist, lacks the stimulative force of the moving atmosphere. For these reasons it is very doubtful if nudity as practised in many of the indoor clubs, where games, exercises and dancing are indulged in in a state of nakedness, is of any pronounced beneficial value.

The use of artificial sunlight was originally advocated for the treatment of specific diseases or conditions, such as rickets and surgical tuberculosis; definite lesions, such as ulcers, wounds and certain skin affections; in circumstances or cases where outdoor sun treatment was impossible or unavailable.

Not unnaturally the benefits resulting from such treatment, and its curative value, were greatly exaggerated; especially when the commercial possibilities of artificial-light treatment were thoroughly realised. The

whole thing lends itself to a good deal of quackery and commercial exploitation, both in the matter of treatment by unqualified practitioners, and in the supply of lamps for generating ultra-violet rays in the home. The treatment is advocated for many diseases on which it cannot possibly produce any beneficial results, and in certain other maladies, where it is contra-indicated owing to its liability to aggravate the disease. There are lamps recommended and sold which generate no ultra-violet rays at all—because of this the selection of a reliable lamp is of extreme importance.

Light treatment, whether in the form of outdoor sun-ray treatment or of artificial heliotherapy, is not a specific cure for all forms of surgical tuberculosis. Its value lies in its virtue as a *supplementary* form of treatment. Sir Henry Gauvain's remarks upon this very point are particularly revealing. He says :

“ Let us first briefly consider where it fails ; we shall then be better able to appreciate when and how it may be usefully employed. If, as alleged, the sun will cure all forms of surgical tuberculosis, why is it that it will not prevent infection and will not cure the disease in subjects living in the most sunny districts ?

Tuberculosis is a serious scourge in Egypt and India. On equatorial islands, where the native may live nude all the year round and where sunlight of high actinic value is always obtainable, tuberculosis will readily infect and rapidly slay the unimmunised islander. It is endemic in Switzerland, the European country so extolled for heliotherapy. It may even be contracted at a sun-cure station. Were light a specific treatment for tuberculosis we might reasonably expect that the progress of the disease might be prevented or cured under suitable heliotherapeutic conditions. This is not necessarily the case.”¹

The most satisfactory sources of artificially produced ultra-violet radiation are the carbon arc, used so successfully by the Finsen Institute at Copenhagen, and the mercury vapour arc which is so popular in American clinics. The first-named is the old form of electrical light with which we were all familiar twenty years ago; that is, the powerful and brilliant arc-light. To-day, owing to the universality of the glass bulbs, this older form is rarely seen. The main defect of the carbon arc-light is the heat which it generates. To remedy this defect the mercury vapour arc was introduced by

¹ Sir Henry Gauvain, *Sun, Air and Sea Bathing in Health and Disease*.

Hewitt of New York. The basis of this form of lamp is the vapour of quicksilver enclosed in a glass tube, and through this vapour a current of electricity is passed, producing a brilliant light rich in the short ultra-violet rays.

Nearly all the artificial-sunlight lamps used in ray therapy may be classified under one of these two heads.¹ The quartz mercury vapour lamp may be air-cooled or water-cooled. Both types are widely employed, the air-cooled type being used for general treatment of the body, as in constitutional diseases; and the water-cooled type, which may be brought into contact with the skin without any risk of burning, being used for treating local areas or specific lesions.

Actually, the light produced by these powerful lamps is far richer in ultra-violet rays than is the available sunlight itself. It contains the short rays which, in the case of the sun, are absorbed by the atmosphere and never reach the earth at all. For this reason no human being can stand exposure to artificially produced ultra-violet radiation for a *prolonged period* without serious risk of sun-

¹ It may be worthy of note that the electric bulb used for ordinary lighting purposes is useless as a source of ultra-violet radiation, the amount produced being infinitesimal.

burn. In no case should a person be so exposed except under competent medical attention. Millar and Free advise exposures of not more than four or five minutes at a time, exposing first one side of the body and then the other, and, according to the same authorities, there are cases on record where death has resulted through patients falling asleep under the lamp and being seriously burned.¹

The intensity of radiation can, of course, be controlled by lessening or extending the distance between the patient and the source of light, but the best procedure, in cases where the whole of the body is to be subjected to the rays, is to start with a small area of the skin and, day by day, gradually extend the area subjected to light until the whole body can safely be exposed. Thedering says that years of experience taught him that the effect of "frequent short (10 to 15 minutes) ultra-violet douches is more favourable than that of protracted light-baths."²

In a previous chapter attention has been drawn to the valuable effects on the skin of visible light ; and one of the great advantages of outdoor sun treatment over artificial-ray

¹ Ronald Millar and E. E. Free, *Sunrays and Health*, McBride, New York, 1929

² F. Thedering, *Sunlight as Healer*, Sollux Publishing Co., 1926.

therapy has undoubtedly been due to the fact that visible and ultra-violet rays were working in combination. For years the part played by the visible rays was altogether overlooked or insufficiently realised. It was not until long after Finsen's statement regarding the absorption of ultra-violet rays by the blood stream that the true significance of this was thoroughly appreciated, and the discovery made that the cellular activities induced by visible light caused the blood to rush to points where it could be reached by the ultra-violet rays. This is the basis of the clinical treatment advocated by Plank, who says, in relation to artificial-light therapy: "We feel certain that every case of chronic constitutional disorder which is being treated with actinic rays, should first be treated with visible light."¹ The method adopted is to subject the patient to visible-light treatment for a period of from ten to forty-five minutes, followed by exposure under the quartz mercury vapour lamp for half a minute to one minute, at a distance of twenty-four inches, gradually decreasing the distance until a minimum of fourteen inches is reached,

¹ T. Howard Plank, *Actinotherapy and Allied Physical Therapy*, p. 50.

and simultaneously increasing the time of exposure by an additional minute per day until a maximum exposure of ten minutes is attained.

The experience of Plank is borne out by Beaumont, who says :

“ In the first place I would say that far too much is claimed for ultra-violet radiation, that the visible rays play a very prominent part in many of the claims made, and that the infra-red rays have a powerful influence on the body, and although their action has been little studied they are of undoubted therapeutic value.”¹

In the local treatment of ulcers or wounds it is of primary importance that the lesion should be kept clean and as dry as possible. The presence of pus acts as a barrier to the penetration of the ultra-violet rays.

While in applying sun rays to the whole body the analeptic effects are impaired by any suspicion of burning or blistering, in the treatment of certain diseases and local conditions, such as lupus, eczema, carbuncles and ulcers, blistering is an essential part of the technique.

There are many ridiculous ideas current

¹ William Beaumont, *Fundamental Principles of Ray Therapy*.

concerning the health-giving properties of various special kinds of or substitutes for window-glass, and so great is the confusion on this point that there appears to be a generally held opinion that the glass or glass substitute *itself possesses some healing or health-giving power*. It does no such thing. The virtue of the glass lies in the fact that it allows the ultra-violet rays to pass through it—a virtue which ordinary window-glass does not possess to any appreciable extent. But it should be remembered that unless the source of ultra-violet radiation is present—in other words, unless the ultra-violet rays are finding their way through the atmosphere—the question of a medium for their admission into the dwelling-house is of little moment. Thus in all parts of England, from October to April, there is no ultra-violet radiation worthy of serious mention; in all smoky towns and cities throughout the year the vital rays are similarly absent. So that, so far as are concerned the vast bulk of the people living in these islands, whatever kind of glass is fitted in the windows, or whether there is any glass at all, matters little.

During the summer months, however, in all dwelling-houses where the atmosphere is

reasonably free from smoke, the question of providing facilities for the admission of the ultra-violet rays is one of some importance. The best way, of course, would be to do without windows altogether, but for many reasons this is rarely practicable. The most effective of all the special kinds of glass or glass substitutes for allowing the free passage of the ultra-violet rays is fused quartz. But there is the inevitable fly in the ointment. In this case it is a question of cost. Fused quartz entails such heavy expenses in its manufacture that its cost makes it quite out of the reach of anyone not belonging to the "millionaire" class. There are other substitutes for window-glass which have been spoken of highly by those who have tried them, and the cost of which is in no way prohibitive. At the London Zoological Gardens and at the Chicago Lincoln Park Zoo "vitaglass" has proved most satisfactory.

CHAPTER VII

DANGERS OF NUDITY

“ Through tatter’d clothes small vices do appear ,
Robes and furr’d gowns hide all ”—SHAKESPEARE

I

JUST as one can have too much of a good thing, so can the most beneficial rules, regulations and methods, in certain circumstances, prove decidedly dangerous. The practice of nudity is no universal panacea for all the ills to which human flesh is heir ; neither is it to be advocated for every individual irrespective of age, condition or circumstance. -

It is one thing for a healthy active youngster of a dozen summers, and for a young man or a young woman in the early twenties, to divest themselves of every stitch of clothing, and romp about under the sun’s rays ; it is quite another matter for an old man to make any such attempt, or for a middle-aged woman, afflicted with nephritis or *endarteritis*

deformans, to spread-eagle herself on the heated sands.

Generally speaking, all middle-aged and old people, whatever their precise state of health, and all young people suffering from any specific disease, or who are run down in any way, should indulge in sun-bathing only under medical advice, and, in many cases, under medical supervision. Rollier, whose experience with light treatment, both natural and artificial, is an extensive one, mentions that to gain any beneficial result from exposure to sunlight it is essential that the body should possess certain vitamins. He draws attention to the experiments of Eckstein, which showed that rats when fed on food free from these essential vitamins and treated with quartz light, ceased to develop and died quicker than rats which were not exposed to the light.¹

In the human subject the ways in which the sun may affect those not in fit condition or robust health are many. And the reason is not far to seek. It has been mentioned in an earlier chapter of this work that the ultra-violet rays possess the power, in certain

¹ A. Rollier, *Heliotherapy*, 2nd edition.

circumstances, of injuring or destroying the human epidermis. Wherever you have rays of sufficient power to kill bacteria, you have rays of sufficient power to destroy healthy tissue. This point should never be overlooked. But in normal and healthy subjects it *usually* takes considerably longer to destroy tissue than it does to kill bacteria. So that, in effect, the question of whether a human being exposed to the force of ultra-violet rays will be benefited or otherwise depends upon the reaction of the individual in question to ultra-violet radiation, the power of the radiation applied, and the duration of exposure.

Generally speaking, the young and the healthy can stand a good deal of exposure to sunlight (the more powerful artificial lamp is another matter) without any ill effects. But in the case of older persons, of the diseased and the weak, each individual case needs special consideration.

There is invariably the risk of sunstroke, where the metabolism is impaired through general weakness ; there is often the risk of sunburned areas being infected. The sensitiveness of the skin in different individuals, even apart from the state of health, varies

tremendously. Some people can stand far more exposure than others. In certain instances erythema results after the slightest exposure. In this connection Rollier instances the Venetian blondes, who, he says, react so strongly to exposure that burns, followed very frequently by vesicular dermatitis, can only be avoided by covering the skin to be treated with gauze, which procedure necessarily prolongs the cure.

The life one leads has also, even in normal healthy persons, a good deal to do with the reaction to sun-bathing. It is, for instance, the height of folly for clerks, shop assistants, and others who have led sedentary lives for years on end, without any preliminary tentative partial exposure, while on holiday to suddenly divest themselves of the whole of their usual clothing and sprawl about under the blazing sun. The outdoor worker may, perhaps, adopt this procedure with impunity, though even here in most cases a gradual exposure both as regards time and skin area is to be recommended.

Fat persons, too, should be most cautious in exposing themselves, and would do well to avoid the midday sun.

Even the young, the active and the healthy

can easily overdo the thing. Indeed, most of those who go in for nudity do overdo it. They overdo it either by exposing their bodies to the hot sun for too protracted periods, or they engage in exercises or games until they are tired, and then remain sitting or standing about until they feel chilled. Both methods are in all cases inadvisable, as no benefits can possibly accrue from such practices and injury may result.

In every case, however, there are certain warning signs which indicate when the nudist, whether well or ill, should get out of the sun and put on normal clothing. Discomfort of any nature is the first general sign. If one feels chilled in any sense, or too hot, it is an indication that something is wrong. Blistering of the skin is another indication¹: immediately there is any sign of this a move should be made into the shade, or clothing should be resumed. No further exposure should be attempted until the blistered skin is healed. Among the more pronounced after-effects of too-prolonged exposure are

¹ This applies only to nudity in a general sense undertaken by the healthy, and not to clinical ray therapy in the treatment of local disease. For instance, at the Finsen Institute, in the treatment of lupus by ultra-violet radiation, blistering is an essential part of the technique.

insomnia, headaches, loss of appetite, diarrhoea, nausea, and general weariness of body and mind.

Cases where nudity or artificial-light treatment is unsuitable and very often dangerous include certain forms of heart disease. Thus Rollier says : " Cardiac insufficiency even in its initial stage is an absolute contra-indication of Alpine heliotherapy. Each case of valvular disease, advanced myocarditis and bad arterio-sclerosis, is unconditionally ruled out."¹ In less serious forms of cardiac disease, the same authority recommends that the whole of the skin in the region of the heart should be " covered with a white cloth," and that a wide-brimmed white linen hat should be worn.

There are, too, other conditions which prohibit any thought of practising nudity. Nephritis is one, smallpox² is another, scarlet fever is another. And drug addicts would do well to keep on their clothing.

Finally, there is the risk of the practising nudist developing an enormous appetite. Anyone with experience of outdoor life is well

¹ A Rollier, *Heliotherapy*, 2nd edition.

² If a patient suffering from smallpox is exposed to sunlight, the pustules become septic

aware of its effects on food consumption; and according to the Merrills the Germans who go in for *Freikörperkultur* surpass themselves when it comes to eating. It is a danger, this, which is not to be overlooked in these days of dear food. Imagine the weekly food bill of a large nudist family!

Far more dangerous than the sun's rays are the rays produced artificially by the carbon arc and the mercury vapour lamps. It has been indicated that these lamps produce rays to which, under the most favourable conditions, such as the Alpine slopes or the Colorado mountains, even the out-and-out nudist is never exposed. It was to these rays, and to this danger, that Professor Dixon, in an address to the British Medical Association, referred: "The radiations from ultra-violet lamps which emit rays of shorter wavelength than those found in the solar spectrum are as foreign, when applied through the skin to the body, as to be comparable with the administration of a poisonous drug."

It is because of this that artificial-light exposure should never be contemplated unless advised by a specialist in ray therapy, and then only under skilled supervision.

II

So much for the dangers connected with the physical side. Admittedly these are restricted, in the main, to delicate individuals who have no business to be bothering their heads with the nudity cult at all.

The moral dangers, in my opinion, are of far greater consequence.

It will, I think, be admitted by all except, perhaps, the most fanatic of the members of the nudist groups, that nakedness is never likely to become universal. Certainly I cannot see it becoming in any way general for many years to come, at any rate. We may, however, take it for granted that there will be some nudists—for instance, those keen enough and wealthy enough—who will live in a state of nakedness for long periods at a stretch, in some cases perhaps as long as six months or more. Others, and the majority, will enjoy nudity sporadically, during their summer holidays and at week-ends, much in the way that, in more degenerate days, men used to indulge in orgies of drunkenness or of sexual adventure.

Now the main danger, as I see it, in connection with all this is in relation to the

tenure of marriage. Practising nudists wax enthusiastic regarding the number of married couples included in their organisations ; many clubs restrict admission to the married or to those about to be married. The danger spot lies in the fact, to which I have referred, that nudity is practised by fits and starts. The devotee struts about naked for a time and then he dons his trappings and hies himself to the city. His wife or his fiancée or his mistress does the same. And precisely here lies the danger. If they remained in a permanent state of nakedness, all would be well. But they don't, and the moment they don their clothes, the danger obtrudes itself. The man has been frolicking about with his wife; he has seen her nude body to an extent he has never done before and in circumstances calculated to show up every blemish. So long as she is naked, and all the other women he sees are naked, too, everything is well. But when the two of them get back to city life and mix with beautifully upholstered women full of allure and mystery, they are in danger. To the man, there is no longer any mystery in connection with his own wife, and however lovely her apparel, it suggests nothing to him in the shape of allurements—

he is all the time conscious of that mole under the left nipple, that scar on the abdomen, left by an operation, the grotesque skinniness of her legs. His wife, for her part, in precisely similar fashion, is reflecting upon the ugly pot-belly beneath her husband's waistcoat, the eruptive discoloration on his back, the wart-like growth on his right hip.

Similarly, in the case of the unmarried couple. Each loses, for the other, the allure-ment of the unknown ; and if ever the two of them do go so far as actually to marry, their honeymoon is a singularly tame affair. It was all very well and good for Sir Thomas Browne, going one farther even than the modern eugenists with their medical histories and charts, to advocate that the intending man and wife should be given opportunities to examine each other's bodies before taking the fatal step, but in making his suggestion he betrayed a woeful lack of knowledge regarding the psychological processes connected with what is termed falling in love. The attraction of man for woman and of woman for man is based on the unknown, on a sense of mystery ; and, as we have seen in a previous chapter, this mystery is aroused and intensified by clothing. Thus the decep-

tion which, according to Sir Thomas Browne and some modern writers, clothing enables man and woman (especially woman) to practise is an essential part of the process of falling in love. Take away the means of practising it, and you go a long way towards destroying the institution of marriage itself. The gorgeous upholstery, the dainty footwear, the silken hose, and the pretty face, suggest other equally charming though hidden potentialities. But imperfections suggest, and can suggest, nothing but other imperfections: witness the bald head, the strawberry nose, the hare-lip, the bow-legs. Neither the man nor the woman looks farther.

The imperfections of the human body, in both its male and female aspects, are too many and too marked. Many of the advocates of nudism to-day make the error of overlooking or minimising these defects, not only as regards their individual aspects, but also in respect of their universality. They start out with the popular assumption that the human body, and especially the female human body, is a thing of charm. Frances and Mason Merrill deny that the perfect body is ugly. True. But what about the imperfect body? Even admitting that the ideal

human being is the thing of beauty that it is supposed to be, relatively few specimens approach anywhere near this standard. For every one such woman of beauty in form and outline, there are a hundred who, deprived of their artificial embellishments, are offensive to the sight of the beholder ; for every man who approaches anywhere within measurable reach of Adonis there are a full hundred who, either through obesity, excessive thinness, deformities, or the marks of loathsome diseases, make one wish to spit in disgust.

In the remark quoted by the Merrills in their nudity book, there was much truth, possibly more than the lady who was responsible for it herself realised : “ Women are afraid to come, but they lose their fear the first time—as soon as they have seen that the other women are ugly, too.”¹

¹ Frances and Mason Merrill, *Among the Nudists*

CHAPTER VIII

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

"It is an interesting question how far men would retain their relative rank if they were divested of their clothes."—
THOREAU

I

Will the nudist movement continue to grow until the majority of us go about naked whenever opportunities permit? I do not think so. The big point in the case for nudism is that nakedness is healthy. No one can controvert this. The medical evidence, apart from that provided by the nudists themselves, is indisputable. But this, in itself, is no compelling reason for the advancement of nudism. Healthy life, *for its own sake*, despite popular opinion, has never appealed in anything more than a sporadic form to the populace. Most persons eat too much. This again is indisputable. It is nothing new. It has been drummed into our

ears for generations. To-day there is, among the female population, a craze for dieting and slimming, ostensibly for health's sake, but actually for no such thing. It is fashionable to be slim; indeed, the slender outline is an essential setting for the modes of the moment, and it is because of fashion's decree and not for health's sake that less food is being consumed. It may be argued, and admittedly with some force, that the means matters little, it is the results that count. Whatever the reason behind the reduced consumption of food and the increased exercising of the body that are so popular to-day, the health of the people is thereby improved. The weak point in all this is that where the end is secured by wrong and inefficient means, there is always a danger that at any moment the benefits will come to a sudden stoppage. A change of fashion, and, health or no health, the slimming craze will be no more.

I think much the same thing applies to the nudity cult. The reasons that are inducing people in Europe and in America—people who, since birth, have been accustomed to covering nine-tenths of their skin area with clothing—to begin suddenly at certain times

casting off every stitch of their clothing and prancing about as God made them, are many. The modern "open air" craze, which has manifested itself in sports, camping, hiking, *et al.*, and is ever on the look-out for new cults to feature, has a good deal to do with it; the growth of democracy, socialism and communism have had some effect in certain circles; the growing penchant for notoriety is not to be disregarded. Apropos of all this one cannot overlook the special significance attached to the fact that the modern nudity cult was founded in Germany, and that its greatest developments and manifestations have likewise been on German soil. In no civilised country in the world perhaps—certainly in no European country—is there a stronger trend towards naturism, as the "back-to-Nature" movement is now called, than in Germany. It was the naturist group which was responsible for the beginning of the nudist movement. The labour groups, ever ready to welcome with open arms any means which promised to contribute towards the abolition of aristocracy and class feeling, were quick to see the possibilities in nudism. One cannot overlook that, in the overwhelming main, German nudists belong to the poor

and working classes. Last, but not least, sex curiosity has had its share.

You cannot, whatever you do, so long as sex is treated as it is to-day, get away from the sex side of the thing. The moment you mention nudity people's minds immediately—consciously or unconsciously—make connotations with sex. They oughtn't to, but they do. And here is the irony of the situation as I see it. Sex is the main factor which attracts anyone to nudity, whatever ostensible reason may be given out to the world. And sex, unless I am grievously in error, will kill this attractiveness, once it has been given the chance to function. Indeed, one may formulate a sort of law. The greater the sexual attractiveness of nudity to the recruit, the bigger the disappointment and the quicker the killing of interest. I have already attempted to show that the greatest destroyer of passion is the sight of the nude body. But the average person does not know this. He thinks firmly and conclusively, that the exact reverse is the truth : a belief which, as we have seen, is the result of the practice of keeping the body covered. In their book, *Among the Nudists*, Frances and Mason Merrill refer to this sexual lure thus :

"Another motive, largely unconscious, or that we are ashamed to admit, is sex curiosity." It is this shame connected with sex popping out again. It leads the majority to conceal the real reason for their interest in the nudity movement, and, because of this, one cannot always take at their face value the reasons given to the world. Indeed, if one looks a little farther than ostensible reasons one finds all the proof one wants.

We read in *The Sun-Bathing Review* :

"One of the chief problems of the organisers of a Family Sun- and Air-Bathing Society is the unattached man, the freelance, who wishes to join but has no woman companion to bring. Applications for membership from such men very greatly exceed the total number of applications from women—in fact, for every one hundred men who apply only ten women write in. Yet the Sun-Bathing Society has laid it down as a rule that men who wish to join must be accompanied by a woman, or by a child or children, though, on the other hand, a woman is encouraged to bring a girl friend rather than a man."¹

These facts are brimming with significance. It is in accordance with the reaction of

¹ *The Sun-Bathing Review*. *Journal of the Sun Societies*, Vol I No 1, Spring, 1933, p. 21

society, as at present constituted, to sex that man should be absorbedly interested in the nude female figure, far more than woman is in male nudity. There are many explanations for this greater interest on the part of man, but it is unnecessary to go into these reasons here. Suffice it to say that these explanations are precisely the same as account for the greater interest of man in Parisian "peep-shows" and "art studies"; in the New York burlesque shows; in medical erotica.

Coincidentally, this selfsame eagerness on the part of men to join nudist groups which are open to both sexes explains their coincident reluctance to bring with them their own wives or sweethearts. The basic motive that, in many instances, induces a man to join leads him to suspect the motives of other members of his own sex and to gravely doubt their expressed honourableness and rectitude where his own female relatives or friends are concerned. It is the old dual attitude of man towards woman which lives through the ages and flourishes in all circumstances—the attitude whereby every man looks upon the woman to whom he is married or about to marry through one pair of spectacles, and upon every other woman through another and

entirely different pair. And so, in nine cases out of ten, he goes to the nudist park as he goes to a brothel or to a night club of dubious respectability, and similarly he views with the gravest disapproval the attendance of any member of his own family. And altogether apart from and in addition to his fears for the moral safety of his wife or his inamorata or any family dignitary, her presence, in most instances, would seriously cramp his own style.

One need not, therefore, expect the average man to encourage his fiancée, or his mistress even, in any circumstances, to join a nudist organisation. Nor need one expect, in the majority of cases, the man who is married to a young and pretty wife with whom he is still in love to agree to any proposal which involves her undressing before a collection of men, known or unknown, friends or foes. So certain am I on this point that I would wager much that most of the *married* women who are members of the nudist clubs are so ugly that there is not the smallest fear of them ever tempting the most desperate of sex-starved men, so old that they may with perfect safety be considered to be well outside the sexual danger zone; or are, for any one of

many reasons, being placed in a position of danger (so thought) by husbands who would welcome any opportunity to be relieved of their burdens! True, there are exceptions. In instance, those seeking healthy improvements; and those who pursue the cult long enough to destroy sex curiosity.

Because of the distempers peculiar to their sex women cannot be expected to embrace the nudity movement with the same enthusiasm as men, nor can those who do join the various clubs and societies be expected to appear with the regularity and continuity of the male sex. It is owing to this physiological difficulty, too, that most women who are enthusiastic sun-bathers favour the wearing of slips—otherwise there would arise the necessity for either wearing some such protective covering during the menstrual periods (a procedure not without embarrassment), or of temporarily giving up the cult.

II

It may, however, be taken as certain that those who join the nudity movement *simply and solely to gratify sex curiosity* will quickly tire of it. It is because of this that I think

the cult is sure to carry a very considerable floating population. Then again, in considering the great interest displayed in nudity, one must not overlook the comparatively large proportion of pseudo-nudists. By these I mean all those individuals who have no intention whatever of actually practising nudism, but are apparently greatly interested in it. In such cases the whole thing resolves itself into sex curiosity in a spectacular sense. It is on a par with the sex curiosity which draws in their thousands men of all ages to be spectators at the seaside swimming-pools and bathing-beaches ; it is on a par with the sex curiosity which draws adolescents of both sexes to watch with gaping eyes the antics of the inhabitants of Monkey Hill at the London Zoo. As it is, nudism is practised privately, and so the sex curiosity of these interested humans cannot find expression in the role of spectators—they adopt the next best thing, they get a vicarious satisfaction from the pictorial representations in the German and French nudist magazines. If anyone is inclined to doubt my word let them spend half an hour hanging around one of the bookstalls where these magazines are exposed for sale.

III

The greatest enemy of nakedness is the ugliness of man and woman, to which reference has already been made in these pages. The Venus and the Adonis might champion the cause of nudity in all circumstances and at all times ; but the ugly and the deformed, whenever opportunity offered, would slink away and don the gaudy trappings and ornaments which would place them upon terms of equality with those blessed by God or Nature with perfect limbs and bodies.

Divorced, therefore, from its health-promoting qualities—wherein it ranks as a cult to be enjoyed or cultivated for a certain period of each day, much as is the diurnal bath, or the constitutional walk, or the matutinal round of golf ; or, for a matter of weeks, during the yearly holiday, much as the wealthy business man has his yearly orgy of dissipation in Paris or Berlin or Vienna—one can well imagine that the more prosperous and powerful citizens of any civilised state will be against nudity in any but its most sporadic outbursts.

It is easy to understand that the most enthusiastic devotees of *Freikörperkultur* are

the German socialists and labour groups. The under dog naturally and inevitably welcomes any movement which will bring his superiors, financially and mentally, to his own level. It is the creed of democracy. Nothing in a clothed society destroys superiority more than a uniform. Anyone who happened to be taken from a position of authority or from a position calling for the functioning of individuality, and compelled to serve as a private during the world war, will realise very fully the truth of this statement. It is this very thing, more than any other factor, that, in the case of the private soldier or of the pensioner, destroys individuality, and subverts intellectual initiative. The well-fed uniformed slave of democratic civilisation is, if anything, in worse plight intellectually than the ill-fed, tattered derelict, whose serfdom is that of dependence on economic conditions.

It is questionable if even a uniform is a greater leveller than nakedness. There is no disguising the fact that one is divested of nearly all, if not all, one's importance in the eyes of one's compatriots when one doffs one's clothes. "Lives the man that can figure a naked Duke of Windlestraw address-

ing a naked House of Lords ? ” said Carlyle with biting satire.

IV

There is one other aspect of the nudity question which seems to have received the smallest possible consideration from anyone concerned with the movement ; and especially is this the more remarkable as regards those who are opposed to nudity.

The bulwark on which the nudists make their case is health. They stress this side of the thing so much, and present such a weight of argument relating to the beneficial effects of sun-bathing, one is driven to the conclusion that if only these islands of ours were blessed by the sun with more of its smiling rays, and we could put convention at defiance and throw off for ever our clothes, we should enjoy perfect health, be strong and vigorous, and live to a ripe old age. These, I say, are the inferences anyone might reasonably draw from the arguments presented by the nudists.

We have, so far as Europe is concerned, no means of checking up on all this, as nudism has not been practised long enough or regularly enough by the nudists themselves to provide

any evidence worthy of the name. So let us leave the nudists, and turn to the native races of Africa, of Asia and of Polynesia, who have been practising complete nudity or semi-nudity, under the most favourable conditions, all their lives, and whose ancestors likewise have been trotting about naked since the beginning of time. What do we find? We find, in many cases, puny enfeebled races, as in some of the African and Asiatic tribes. With certain exceptions, few of the African and Asiatic races, in the matter of physique and powers of endurance, can in any way compare with Europeans and Americans. Physically, few of the American Indians were equal in strength to the pioneer white settlers; nor were the Australian Blacks, nor were the Tahitians.

So we arrive at a conclusion that there are strong grounds for supposing that the value of nudity lies in its sporadic indulgence. The sun-bath for a couple of hours a day, or the sun-bathing holiday of a week or a month, is better than nudity as a full-time occupation. As we have seen, the habitual nudist develops a degree of pigmentation only one degree less in density than that flourished by some native races, that shuts out the ultra-violet rays

almost as effectually as does clothing itself. The benefits of sun-bathing lie largely in exposure to these ultra-violet rays, and it would appear this can only be secured by alternating between nudism and clothing; never allowing the skin to become satiated, as it were, with its tonic. It reminds one somewhat of purgatives and their employment by those suffering from constipation. The secret of success in the use of a purgative is to give it a rest occasionally: failure to observe this rule surely leads to that particular purgative speedily losing its effect. May not this, too, be the secret of success in the application of sunlight to the human body?

V

And now I can attempt to summarise the position, as I see it.

The benefits to be secured from the practice of nudity by healthy individuals in proper circumstances are pronounced and incontestable. But nudity, like strong drink and most things in this world that are worth having, can be abused and overdone, in which case it either becomes ineffective, or it is transformed into a source of danger. The

ideal practical method would appear to be an exposure of two to three hours daily ; or, failing this, a longer exposure hebdomadally.

There are no reasons, moral or otherwise, why those who care to do so should not join clubs where both sexes mingle together freely, either entirely naked or semi-naked. Those who fight shy of promiscuous nudity need not necessarily deprive themselves of the benefit of nakedness—they can (always taking steps to ensure that they are effectually screened from the public gaze) practise sun-bathing in their own back gardens.

Obviously, the full benefits of nudity can only be available, in any adequate sense, to a future generation. So far as are concerned the bulk of those living to-day the nudity cult can be of academic interest only. The phrase “ It’s never too late,” does not apply to the practice of nakedness. Possibly many of the children of to-day, and again possibly all the children of to-morrow, will reap the harvest, and grow up better in every way, physically, mentally and morally, for having discarded all the clothes, to which we of this generation are accustomed, some of the time, and some of these clothes all the time.

APPENDIX I

A GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS

ABDOMEN : The cavity, often referred to as the belly, which lies between the basin containing the genitals (private parts) and the chest.

ANÆMIA : In popular terminology anæmia refers to absence of blood. Actually, it implies a deficiency in the quality, as well as the quantity, of the blood ; and is often an indication of some serious disease.

ANALEPTIC : Anything possessing the power of building up or restoring health and strength after illness

ANAPHRODISIAC : A drug or other means, chemical, mechanical or psychical, for decreasing or suppressing sexual desire or capacity.

ANTIPYIC : Possessing the power to prevent or check the formation of pus or matter

APHRODISIAC : A drug or other means, chemical, mechanical or psychical, for stimulating or increasing sexual desire or capacity.

ARTERIO-SCLEROSIS : The development of fibrous tissue in the blood-vessels, with consequent hardening or induration of the arteries (large veins).

BACILLI : A term referring collectively to a number of microscopic unicellular organisms, or disease germs, which cause certain communicable

diseases, such as anthrax, tuberculosis, typhoid and malaria.

BACTERIA : Microscopic organisms, commonly referred to as microbes or germs, of which there are many species, possessing the power of breeding at an extraordinarily rapid rate by fission or by spores. They are of two kinds: pathogenic organisms, which are the active agents in the spreading of infectious diseases; and saprophytic organisms found in dead and decaying animal and vegetable tissues.

BACTERICIDE : Anything mechanical or chemical which possesses the power of destroying bacteria (germs or microbes), either in living tissue, or in any circumstances favourable to their existence.

CELLULITIS : Inflammation of the tissue which lies immediately under the outer skin.

CHLORESTEROL : A white crystalline substance which is present in the skin and tissue.

CICATRIX : The scar left after the healing of a wound or an ulcer.

ENDARDERITIS DEFORMANS : The condition where the endothelium (lining) of the larger arteries (large veins) is inflamed, often as a result of mechanical irritation.

EPIDERMIS (Cuticle) : The surface or outside layer of the skin, as distinguished from the *derm* (inside layer of skin).

ERYSIPELAS (St. Anthony's Fire) : A disease of the skin, characterised by a diffused and gradually spreading inflammation, accompanied by fever.

ERYTHEMA : Reddening of the skin, as from sun-burn, scalding or burning, usually followed by

peeling. It is superficial and usually yields readily to treatment.

FREIKÖRPERKULTUR (Free Body Culture): The term now very generally used in Germany in referring to the nudist movement. It has largely superseded and displaced the older term of *Nacktkultur*.

FREILICHTPARK (Free Light Park): The enclosure or "park" where nudism is practised in Germany. It is usually situated in the country where it cannot be overlooked by the local population. In suburban districts the enclosure is adequately screened from the public gaze by fencing.

GYMNOSOPHY: Originally the doctrine subscribed to by an Indian philosophic sect; the main principles of which were nakedness, chastity, vegetarianism and nature-worship. The neo-Gymnosophic movement of to-day apparently is concerned with the cult of nudity for health and morality.

GLYCOSURIA (*Diabetes mellitus*): A disease characterised by the discharge of glucose (sugar) in the urine (water).

INSOMNIA: Inability to sleep, or lack of sleep.

IMPETIGO: A disease of the skin characterised by the appearance of red spots and mattery pimples occurring over a wide area; or a rough crust covering a sharply defined surface. According to Saboraud, the disease is due to infection by the germ known as *streptococcus pyogenes*.

LESION: Usually the morbid change in or injury to any function or organ.

LUPUS (*Lupus erythematosus*, *Lupus vulgaris*): A tubercular skin disease characterised by chronic destructive ulceration. It usually attacks the face,

though *lupus vulgaris* may also appear on the limbs or trunk. In its chronic form the ulceration is deep and most destructive, leaving a permanent white scar.

MARASMUS: Atrophy or wasting of the flesh from any cause. It is often referred to popularly as consumption or "decline."

MASTITIS: Inflammation of the breast due to infection of the mammary gland with septic micro-organisms (germs). The section of the breast affected becomes enlarged, hard and painful. In its chronic form it is often wrongly diagnosed as cancer of the breast.

MENSTRUATION (Monthlies): The bloody discharge from the female genitals (private parts) which occurs at regular intervals, usually once every month.

METABOLISM: The physiological process whereby the cells, tissues and blood manufacture or transform nutritive material into other substances.

MYOCARDITIS (Carditis): Inflammation of the fleshy part of the heart.

NAVEL (The umbilicus; belly-button): The familiar central hollow in the abdomen (belly). It is really a scar resulting from the severing, after childbirth, of the cord connecting the child with its mother.

NACKTKULTUR: Literally nude culture. The term originally (and still) used in Germany in referring to the nudist movement.

NEPHRITIS (Bright's disease, Albuminuria): Inflammation of the kidneys, which may be acute or chronic, and is characterised by albumen being present in the urine (water). Dropsy is also usually a co-existent symptom.

OBESITY (Pot-belly) : The condition where there are excessive deposits of fat in all or some parts of the body. Thus "general obesity" indicates corpulency throughout the body; "splanchnic obesity" indicates limited and usually abdominal corpulency (pot-belly).

OSTEO-MYELITIS : A diseased condition of the interior of the bones, marked by inflammation.

PHLYCTENULES . A condition of the skin, where it is covered with minute mattery pimples or spots.

Pus (Matter) : The product of suppuration, consisting of yellowish-white matter of the consistency of cream, containing albumen, saline, fibrin and often blood and ropy, sticky fluid.

RICKETS (Rachitis) : A disease of childhood, characterised by crooked limbs, softened and curved bones, deformed stature and general weakness. It is a constitutional disease, due to lack of sunlight and wrong or insufficient nutrition.

RONTGEN RAYS (X-rays) : Rays generated in an exhausted vacuum tube by electrical discharge, possessing the power of passing through bodies opaque to ordinary light rays. They were discovered by W. K. Rontgen in 1895.

SPECTRUM : The various rays which are included in the composition of white light, which when passed through a prism or other suitable refracting medium, give the well-known coloration of the rainbow.

SPIROCHAETES : One of the tribes of bacteria (germs), having the appearance of screw-shaped threads. Cholera and relapsing fever are caused by germs belonging to this order.

SUPPURATION : The process of forming matter, as in an abscess, boil or carbuncle.

THERAPY (Therapeutics) : The branch of medicine dealing with the treatment of disease.

TUBERCULOSIS (Surgical) : Tubercular affections of the glands, skin, joints and limbs.

ULCER : A sore secreting or discharging matter, caused through the injury or infection and consequent disintegration of living tissue. Ulceration is often associated with tuberculosis, syphilis and other diseases.

VISCERA : The organs which are contained in the abdomen (belly).

VITAMINS : Certain substances essential to the growth and health of all animal life, which are found in foods. What exactly these substances are is unknown—only their existence and action have been discovered.

X-RAY : The Röntgen ray.

APPENDIX II

ENGLISH NUDIST AND SUN-BATHING SOCIETIES: THEIR POLICIES AND AIMS¹

THE SUN-BATHING SOCIETY, Sun Lodge, Upper Norwood, S.E. 19. "Founded to promote the practice of active sun- and air-bathing amongst families and young people." The Sun-Bathing Society publishes an illustrated quarterly magazine, the *Sun-Bathing Review*, price 1s.

THE GYMNIC ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN (Affiliated to, and in co-operation with the European Union for Freikorperkultur).

79 St. Martin's Lane, W.C 2.

This Association is not, in itself, a *practising* nudist society, but is an organising body, to which are affiliated various practising societies.

The objects of the Association are :

(1) To strive to unite all persons of good character without distinction of age, sex, religion or political opinion, who are in a healthy condition physically, mentally and morally—and who consider that

¹ No claim to completeness is made in connection with this list of Societies. New Societies and Clubs are continually springing up in various parts of the country. The secretaries of these, and of any other organisations that have been overlooked, are invited to send particulars to the Author, c/o the Publishers, with a view to insertion in any subsequent edition of this book which may be called for.

nudity, when practised under proper conditions and under the guidance of men and women whose character is above reproach, will advance the regeneration of the human race.

(2) To admit, as Associate Members, those persons who are unable to link up with a practising group, with a view to the formation of such groups as soon as there are sufficient Associate Members in any one district. To put such approved Associate Members, where mutually desirous, in touch with one another.

(3) To admit, by affiliation, all Societies and Groups of people in Great Britain who are in sympathy with the objects, and who conform to the Rules of the Association.

(4) To publish a magazine.

(5) To advertise the activities of the Association by judicious means.

(6) To arrange lectures to enlighten the public.

(7) To provide assistance to new Societies and Groups.

(8) To undertake the investigation of any aspect of the movement which may subsequently arise or which may require elucidation.

The following precautionary measures are laid down as "Conditions of Affiliation" of Practising Groups in the constitution of the Gymnic Association :

(1) Membership shall be confined to persons of good repute.

(2) The Society or group shall be controlled by a properly elected committee of management, drawn from its own membership.

(3) All funds shall be in the full charge of such committee of management, and shall be used solely for the purpose of maintaining and improving the amenities of the society or group.

(4) Married persons applying for membership individually shall be admitted only upon the production of the signed, written consent of the partner to the marriage not wishing to join.

(5) Married, but separated persons, applying for membership individually, shall be admitted only upon the production of the signed, written consent of the separated partner not wishing to join.

(6) Persons under twenty-one years of age shall not be admitted to membership without the signed, written consent of their parents or guardians.

Gymnos, the official organ of the Gymnic Association of Great Britain, is an illustrated monthly magazine, price 1s

NATIONAL SUN AND AIR ASSOCIATION, 6 Foster Lane, Cheapside, E.C.3. "The N.S.A.A. is an association which has for its object the promotion of the practice of complete nudity in common by both sexes, in the belief that this practice is both morally and physically healthy and can be of no small assistance in helping mankind to escape from the evil effects of modern mechanisation. It must not be imagined from the latter phrase that the Association advocates the abolition of machinery or even the slowing down of mechanical evolution. It is merely a recognition of the fact that the herding together of masses of the population in towns, offices and factories needs to be offset by greater opportunities for the enjoyment of light and fresh

air in the country, to which is coupled the belief that the benefits of sun and air can only be reaped to the full in a state of nakedness.

The chief means by which the Association endeavours to attain its object are by compiling a register of individuals desirous of practising nudity, and by putting members living in the same district into touch with each other so that a nucleus for the formation of a group can be formed. The Association can then offer advice to those forming the new group—advice which is the result of practical experience of other groups—and some of the difficulties to be contended with can be pointed out and suggestions offered as to the best means of overcoming them.

It is hoped that after formation groups will affiliate to the Association, as by taking this step contact is effected and maintained with the other affiliated groups and also with the movement as a whole. It is obviously to the advantage of all concerned that there should be close co-operation between the various scattered units, and the Association, by acting as a connecting link, offers the necessary machinery to this end."

THE INTERNATIONAL SUN-BATHING AND "BACK-TO-NATURE" MOVEMENT, "Rocdene," 187 Uxbridge Road, Hampton Hill, Middlesex." Objects : To promote, amongst other things, nudity for in- and out-door work, pleasure, dancing, games, sports, etc. Teach the substitution of pride of body, health, beauty and physical and mental fitness for prudery, mock-modesty, humbug and hypocrisy."

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